WHERE SHALL SHE LIVE?

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WHERE SHALL SHE LIVE?

THE HOMELESSNESS OF THE WOMAN WORKER

WRITTEN FOR THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR WOMEN'S LODGING-HOMES

BY

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PREFACE

THE need for this book has arisen from many inquiries addressed to the Secretaries, Northern and Southern, of the National Association for Women's Lodging-Homes,[1] and from the entire lack of literature on the subject. There are advantages and disadvantages in collaboration, a certain danger of repetition being a disadvantage, compensated by the advantage of two points of view. In the present case it is eminently desirable that the National need should be viewed not only from the emotional standpoint of a woman, but in the cold light of statistics, collected by one who has had

[1] See Appendix II.

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access to that invaluable storehouse of facts, the British Institute of Social Service. Therefore the present volume is no mere outcome of sentiment, but we feel sure that its solid facts, no less than its startling revelations of national need, will ensure it a hearing from the British public.

After some consideration it was decided that the Southern Secretary, with his mass of available facts, should first solidly present his case. This has been done in Chapters I. to V., which are from his pen. The task of setting forth dangers and difficulties arising from this state of things, the case for reform, the present attempts, public or private, and the summing up, was left to the woman's pen (Chapters VI. to X.). The Appendices furnish a number of useful facts, and it is hoped that the tentative list of safe lodging-homes will shortly become greatly enlarged, both by further information, collected by women in their own towns, and also by local provision of further safe lodging-homes.

We feel that the need can hardly be exaggerated, and that we are privileged to call public attention to it. If any reader feels stirred to further interest, inquiries will gladly be received by

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Where Shall She Live?

CHAPTER I

THE WOMAN WORKER OF TO-DAY

"A nation cannot permanently remain on a level above the level of its women."—SIR WILLIAM RAMSAY.

IT has now become a mere commonplace to state that the truest test of the advance in civilisation of any people is its treatment of women. Professor Westermarck, the great authority on this question, has stated that "among the *uncivilised* races the position of women varies. Among some it is undoubtedly very bad; among others it is extremely good, and, generally speaking, it is much better than it is commonly supposed to be."[1] Whether this last statement could be substantiated as regards women in general of the *civilised* nations to-day is an open question. But it is certain that much more needs to be known of, and done for, one section at

[1] Sociological Papers, 1904: "Woman in Early Civilisation."

least of the women of these peoples, viz., the workers.

Since the industrial revolution of the last century we have been face to face with a new problem in our national life—the woman worker. By that silently-effected but momentous change, which came over England in the dawn of the nineteenth century, our people have become, and irrevocably become, an industrial nation. We were, before that time, essentially an agricultural race, but we have changed all that and are now, for better or for worse, a commercial nation. Nor is there any prospect of a further change. It seems as certain as anything can be that we cannot go back upon this step in our history. All the changes, all the improvements of the future will rest upon the assumption that we are now an industrial and not an agricultural people.

Of the many important questions which have emerged in consequence of this change, we are concerned here only with the effects which it has produced upon women. The first and most important of these effects is the fact that woman has now become as economically free as her brother worker. Under agricultural conditions woman tends to remain, as amongst many uncivilised peoples she now is, the mere dependant of man. But to-day, in our large towns, even

the young woman of seventeen is an industrial unit, just as the man is an industrial unit, and she must be dealt with as such. The economic freedom of woman is a new and an extremely important factor in the industrial life of to-day. We are fully conscious of the fact that this economic freedom is at present little more than freedom to starve, but that is another aspect of the question ; and upon this we shall hope to say something later. This change in the position of woman has meant nothing less than a revolution in many of her habits, conditions, and, surely, in the dangers to which she is exposed.

Let us briefly review the situation in the light of this new factor and see what are the effects of the industrial employment of woman upon the women themselves. According to the 1901 census, we have in England and Wales 4,171,751 women, or 31.6 per cent. of the whole number of women, engaged in industrial and domestic employment. The kinds and grades of work at which this great host of women toil are, of course, innumerable. Nothing is better known to workers amongst industrial women than the fact that these divisions and classes of labour are accompanied by social distinctions certainly as marked as are the distinctions in "society" at large. "The makers of hats and of flue-brushes do not mingle. The weaving girl has no know-

ledge of the spinning girl in the textile town ; the packer and sorter is 'superior' to the calender hand in the laundry ; the bottler of lemonade does not move to the collar factory in the slack season." [1] This is an important factor in the question and has recently been noted by the authors of an admirable study of the women workers of Birmingham.

"Generally speaking one soon learns that most kinds of work are performed by distinct classes of girls. . . . But in most cases a girl's 'class' is fixed before she starts work, and this is the determining influence in her choice of a trade. Even financial prospects have less importance in the eyes of the more refined girls than this great question of caste." [2]

Though there are so many kinds of calling, yet we may roughly classify them under six heads :

1. There are the more or less professional occupations, *e.g.*, the lady doctor, nurse, teacher, governess, &c., down to, perhaps, the lady companion. The oft-quoted saying, "Woman, having an eye to marriage, is not equally wedded to her trade," may or may not be generally true, but the fact remains that, in these as well as in all other occupations in which women are engaged, countless examples of industry, devotion, and first-rate effi-

[1] P. 11, Appendix vol. xvii. to the Poor Law Commission Report.

[2] "Women's Work and Wages," p. 48.

ciency are to be found. We need not attempt to describe the conditions under which these, the highest grade of women workers, do their work. These conditions will be well known to our readers, and, except in the case of some nurses, governesses, &c., are what is generally described as "comfortable."

2. The next rough division of women workers would include the hosts of girl-clerks, typewriters, warehouse girls, &c., which are found in all our towns and cities. There can be no question that many of the conditions under which this kind of work is done are far from ideal. It is one of the branches of women's work which suffers from being very much sought after. This fact, of course, tends to depress the wages paid for such labour, and, generally, to make the conditions under which it is done less desirable. Of the Birmingham warehouse girls, for example, it is said that they "would have better prospects were not that occupation the general refuge of the poorer girls, who make some determined attempt at refinement, just as clerkships are sought by girls and boys alike who want to 'rise' into the ranks of business, as distinguished from manual work." [1] Miss Gertrude Tuckwell, the well-known authority on "sweating," tells us that, unfortunately, this painfully significant term

[1] "Women's Work and Wages," p. 49.

is not to be used only of the home worker or casual woman labourer. It only too well describes the work of women and girls in much higher grades of occupation.

"The girl clerk, working for ten shillings a week in a crowded basement often late into the night, is an instance of the sweated worker, yet this profession never figures in the popular imagination as an instance of sweating—the gentility of the occupation appears to lift it out of the category and to form its reward."[1]

There is room here for more inquiry, and what is wanted is an impartial revelation of the facts of the case. We shall be surprised if public opinion has not something definite to say when many of these facts, known now only to the few, become the property of all.

3. The next division of women workers embraces the shop assistants, a very definite class of workers. This form of occupation has, undoubtedly, many advantages to offer industrial women, but it also presents several most undesirable features. The living-in system, the long hours (amounting oftentimes to seventy hours in the week) and the comparatively low wages, considering the status which the shop girl is supposed to enjoy, are serious defects in an occupation which might be one of the most suitable to women and

[1] "Woman in Industry," vol. i. p. 4.

girls. Miss Gertrude Tuckwell, in the book from which we have just quoted, uses hard words to describe the conditions under which many of the shop girls live. "Amongst the aristocracy of labour the shop assistants are counted, yet a study of their conditions leaves on one's mind the impression that here, if anywhere, there is sweating." [1] But we should mention one great advantage of which the workers of this class and of the class previously dealt with may avail themselves, viz., the possibility of trade combination. The National Amalgamated Union of Shop Assistants, Warehousemen, and Clerks is a thriving concern, having a membership of 16,500, with reserve funds amounting to £15,000. It is a well-known fact that women find it extremely difficult to form trade unions, and, unfortunately, only one-sixth of the members of the above Union are women. But there is promise of greater success in the future, and much improvement is to be hoped for in the general conditions under which the clerks, warehouse girls, and shop assistants work if effectual combination goes on.

4. Our next class of women workers we need only mention, as they will be the best known to the general reader—those who are engaged in domestic service. The Census Commissioners of 1901 tell us that "domestic

[1] "Woman in Industry," vol. i. p. 5.

service and the allied services employ one-eighth of all the females over ten years of age in urban districts and nearly one-seventh of those in rural districts." These figures represent 10.1 per cent. of the total number of women workers. And yet the unpopularity of this form of occupation is too well known to need comment, and forms "the servant problem" of the middle and upper classes. The objections to it, from the point of view of the girls themselves, could not be better stated than in the words of a factory girl who had herself been a domestic servant.

"When I was about fourteen years of age I went to service for about eighteen months, and I did not like it at all, because you was on from morning till night and you never did know when you were done, and you never did get your meals in peace, for you are up and down all the time; you only get half a day a week there . . . and you never get very large wages in service. And you never know when you are going to get a good place." [1]

"The servant problem" will remain, until there is a more definite regulation of the duties and of the hours of domestic servants and a more general consideration shown, at least in the lower grades of this occupation.

It should be, in the future, one of the most popular and useful forms of woman's work.

[1] See p. 115, "Women's Work and Wages."

It is healthy, it is educational, and it has the great advantage of introducing that friendly intercourse between the better-class woman employer and her employée which tells for good on both the parties concerned.

5. But we have yet to speak of the class of woman workers which absorbs the largest number of industrial women proper, viz., those engaged in workshops, mills, and factories, and whose work is regulated, or partly regulated, by the Factory Acts. Nearly 25 per cent. of the total number of working women are thus occupied.

This is not the place to attempt to describe the comparatively recent phenomenon of the factory girl. It has been done already and done well. Nor can we say more than a word or two as to the general conditions under which such work has to be performed. The first point of importance to notice is that here, at any rate, we are on carefully surveyed ground. We have a host of both women and men factory and workshop inspectors, and, although there is much still left undone that ought to be done, no one can doubt the benefit which has accrued from systematic and official inspection *and from the publication of the records which such inspection affords*. That the physical effects of factory labour, under proper conditions, are not necessarily detrimental to the workers

is plainly set forth, for example, by the Inter-departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration. "Within proper limits as to hours and periods, and with such hygienic surroundings as are attainable, it may be a means of improving the health of women and girls of the poorer classes." [1] The point is that there are so few factories and workshops where anything like ideal conditions are to be found. Miss Clementina Black, writing recently on this subject, states that the conclusion of the matter, to her mind, after much investigation of conditions in the metropolis, was the utter lack of uniformity either as to conditions or as to wages. "In no two factories is there an identity of conditions. In very few is there parity of payments—*individualism run wild!*" [2] Not that we do not agree that much, very much, has been improved in these conditions by the legislation of the two past generations, but that is not to concede a great deal when we recall what the conditions were under which women and girls worked before the Factory Acts came into force. There is still, for large numbers of these women, that constant grind and hopeless monotony of toil which is bound to react injuriously upon the health of the body, not to mention that of the mind.

[1] § 143.
[2] "Makers of Our Clothes," p. 143. (Miss C. Black and Mrs. Carl Meyers.)

"The conditions under which they work, rest, and feed," says the Committee which we have just quoted, "doubtless account for the rapid falling off in physique which so frequently accompanies the transition from school to work," and, as causes of this physical deterioration, they especially refer to "hot rooms, unhealthy surroundings at work, bad food, late hours, excitement and stress of work, superadded to functional anæmia." [1] And in most cases these conditions are first experienced at the most important years of the woman's life. "The Committee are impressed with the conviction that the period of adolescence is responsible for much waste of human material and for the entrance upon maturity of permanently damaged and ineffective persons of both sexes." [2]

More serious still is the moral danger which faces the factory girl. "The factory where married and single women work together, before, during, and after contact with the Poor Law, is a much more powerful instrument of moral corruption than out-relief." This is one of the serious conclusions drawn from an immense amount of evidence presented to the recent Poor Law Commission.[3] The point which we want to make in this connection is,

[1] Report on Physical Deterioration, § 368.
[2] *Ibid.*, § 366.
[3] Appendix vol. (Poor Law Com.) xvii. p. 7.

that to counteract the moral danger of the factory and of the workshop it is of the utmost importance that the woman worker, and supremely the *young* industrial woman, should be able to reckon on the enormous advantage of a good *home*. With housing conditions such as are to be reviewed in the following chapters, it is certain that we are not yet giving this advantage anything like fair play. Oftentimes, the better the woman worker the worse the home from which she comes to her daily toil. Only too true is the saying which one frequently hears as to laundry women: "The best ironer gets the worst husband!"

6. Our last division of women workers includes the large company of home workers, hawkers, charwomen, and, generally, those engaged in the most casual and lowest forms of labour. The terrible lot of the "sweated" woman has been described so recently and so graphically that we shall not attempt to do more than to quote one sentence which is specially pertinent to our subject:

"Can our imagination realise," asks Miss Clementina Black, "what life in such conditions means to a woman, the monotony, the drudgery, the ceaseless fatigue, the unending recurrence of unavailing effort? *The house of such a woman is never really clean; the time that ought to go to scrubbing and sweeping cannot be afforded.* Her children are neglected;

she is so busy earning a few more pence for them that she has no leisure to look after them ; she is the bondslave of her sewing machine and her glue-board." [1]

The causes of this terrible state of affairs are many and far-reaching, of which the following are the chief : the thoroughly depressed condition of the industrial woman as compared with her brother worker, the lower standard of living which, by reason of this condition, the woman worker will accept rather than go to " the house," and the almost limitless supply of casual women labourers who constantly underbid one another for " sweated " work.

We have enumerated now the main divisions of industrial women to be found in our country to-day. In closing this chapter we wish to emphasize only one point concerning the conditions which we have attempted to sketch. That point is, *the lowness of the average wage* for which these women labour, save perhaps those of our first division. It is a consideration which has the closest connection with the general subject of this book.

Says Mill, in an interesting paragraph [2] which should be read in this connection, " It deserves consideration why the wages of women are generally lower, and very much

[1] " Makers of our Clothes," p. 187.
[2] " Political Economy," bk. ii. chap. xiv. 5.

lower, than those of men." He points out the main causes of this phenomenon: (i) that the standard of woman's wages is fixed more according to *custom* than is that of man's wages; (ii) "the occupations which law and usage make accessible to them are comparatively so few, that the field of their employment is overcrowded"; (iii) "the minimum, in their case, is the pittance absolutely requisite for the sustenance of one human being." What that minimum means to the worker recent books on "sweating" describe to us, telling of women toiling for 1½d. an hour or 1s. a day! The Select Committee on Home Work recorded that, in general, there are three classes of woman worker: (i) single women and those who have, for some reason or other, left their husbands or whose husbands are invalided; (ii) wives whose husbands are out of work; and (iii) wives and daughters of men in work, who for personal reasons wish to increase the family income. But, as the authors we have already quoted point out, there is a fourth and large class, viz., those women whose husbands' wages are so small that they are compelled to work to bring the family income up to the lowest possible minimum.[1]

This question of the wages of the woman

[1] "Makers of Our Clothes," p. 148.

worker is, of course, a large and difficult [1] one, and we cannot hope to deal with it here in any sort of detail. The point which we wish to make is that, even when employment of this sort is to be found, the wages which it brings are really not sufficient to enable large numbers of women workers to feed themselves properly or to house themselves decently. But when even the lowest forms of occupation are not to be found, when even the sweated worker is unemployed, what is the situation which confronts the woman worker? For unemployment is as persistent a menace to the woman worker as it is to the man. "Although women's wages are as low as any one could conceive possible, this does not prevent their having to stand idle, *probably to an even greater extent than men,* at each recurring slack season." [2] What, then, is the unemployed woman to do? She must, like her unemployed brother, migrate in search for work. Where shall she go? More important still, how shall she house herself, where shall she lodge whilst she looks for it? It may be objected that this is a

[1] "The whole problem is complicated by the fact that women's earnings are often subsidised by the earnings of others—those of the wife by the husband, those of the daughter by the parents, those of wives, widows, and single women by charity and out-relief."—Appendix vol. xvii. p. 7 (Poor Law Commission).

[2] Minority Report of the Poor Law Commission, pt. ii ch. iv. (D).

serious question, after all, only to a small percentage of the large numbers of our women workers. Not so small as is generally supposed, as may be seen by reference to works dealing with this subject.[1] One thing we may be sure of, it is that if the temptations to mental and moral deterioration are strong to the unemployed man, those temptations are ten times stronger and more insidious to the unemployed woman. We have been speaking of women's occupations, but we have not yet mentioned that occupation which has been called "the oldest trade in the world." It does not bear thinking of—and yet it is as certain as any of the social facts to-day—that large and, we fear, increasing numbers of women and girls are driven into professional prostitution by the fruitless endeavour to find respectable employment. That this number is further increased by those who are ill-housed, especially when in search of employment, succumbing to the evil conditions which surround them, will hardly be doubted if the rest of what we have to say be read.

[1] *Cf.* "Unemployment amongst Women," ch. vi., "Unemployment," by Chapman and Hallsworth (1910).

CHAPTER II

THE HOME OF THE WOMAN WORKER

"Home is the place of peace. And wherever a true wife comes, this home is always round her. Home is wherever she is."—RUSKIN.

WE have briefly described the industrial woman of to-day. Now let us glance at the housing accommodation which the generality of these women secure. It will be no new statement to our readers that what is known as the Housing Problem is, of all our modern social problems, perhaps the most insistent and important. We need give only one word in proof of this, though a volume might be filled with the evidence. The housing problem is an all-important social question because, at bottom, it is the problem of the *Home*. We cannot have a good nation except we have citizens reared in good homes. And, as Charles Kingsley affirmed, "the moral state of a city depends—how far I know not, but frightfully, to an extent as yet uncalculated, and perhaps incalculable — on the physical

state of that city ; on the food, water, air, and *lodging of its inhabitants*." Upon how the woman worker of to-day is housed depends, very largely, the efficiency and productiveness of her work. But, more important still, upon how she is housed depends the efficiency and productiveness of the future generation. For we must not forget that we have many married and widowed industrial women, and that large numbers of our working girls will rear the children of the coming race.

We do not propose giving, even in general terms, a statement of this great question. This can be found in quite a number of accessible books and it is a deep-rooted and complicated problem.

"All the intricate and difficult points arising out of the poverty of the working classes have a distinct bearing on the housing question. It is inextricably bound up with such diverse matters as the health of the people, the land question, the readjustment of taxation, the growth of pauperism and immorality."[1]

What we wish to do in the present chapter is, first, to point out the wide extent of the housing question ; and, secondly, describe the average conditions which the woman worker has to face, showing how these conditions press especially hardly upon her.

1. Mr. Robert Hunter, the American writer

[1] "Housing," Alden and Hayward, p. 67.

on social questions, after a recent tour through England, said : " In visiting British cities and in discussing their conditions with reformers, one feels that England has no municipal problem paramount to that of housing." There is no need to trouble our readers with long lists of statistics. But we will remind them of the one fact that, according to the census of 1901, there were found to be 392,414 overcrowded tenements in England and Wales, in which no less than 2,667,506 persons were living. This means that at least 8 per cent. of our whole population were *officially* recognised as overcrowded. How low a standard this represents in comparison to that which public health and decency demands, all who have studied the question know. Mr. J. S. Nettlefold, of Birmingham, will not be easily charged with overstatement or exaggeration, but he tells us that " a general survey of the whole country shows that only a very small proportion of the poorest classes are properly housed, and a great many of those who are a little better off are not provided for as healthily as they ought to be for the rent paid." [1] When this problem is stated in cold and carefully calculated figures its proportions begin to be dimly realised. " It is, I think, understating the case to say that there are, at the very least,

[1] " Practical Housing," p. 2.

5,000,000 people in this country living in houses that urgently require improvement either in their fabric or surroundings." [1] Are we likely to maintain the physical efficiency, not to say the industrial usefulness, of our people when at least one-eighth of the whole population is badly housed?

And it is important to realise that this evil of bad housing is two-sided. It is, on the one hand, a question of (*a*) *overhousing*, as it has been called, and, on the other, of (*b*) *overcrowding*.

(*a*) Mr. E. R. Dewsnup gives us the following instructive table in his work on this question: [2]

URBAN AREAS WITH A DENSITY OF POPULATION, IN 1901, EXCEEDING 25 PERSONS PER ACRE.

	Population per Acre 1891	Population per Acre 1901
London (Administrative County)	56·5	60·6
West Ham	43·8	57·1
Manchester	39·0	42·1
Birmingham	37·7	41·4
Newcastle-on-Tyne	34·6	40·0
Hanley	30·6	34·8
Oldham	27·7	29·0
Cardiff	20·2	25·7

This table clearly sets forth the urbanisation which is going on apace, taking typical centres of industrial population. It reveals the fact

[1] "Practical Housing," p. 24.
[2] "The Housing Problem," p. 41.

that the number of houses per acre is steadily increasing in spite of the housing reform which is being pushed forward in our large cities. This urbanisation is a serious problem to be faced to-day, for it is as serious to those who are being left behind in the depleted country-side as it is to those who are being herded together in the towns. And, as we have seen in our previous chapter, it is a state of affairs upon which, apparently, there is no going back.

"Two-fifths of the population of England and Wales are crowded together on just over one eight-hundredth part of the total land of the country, another two-fifths occupy a little more than one two-hundred-and-fiftieth part, and the remaining fifth is scattered over the rest of the land." [1]

We shall never really grapple the problem of housing our people—nor, in fact, any of the great social questions—until we have learnt how to deal justly but effectively with the landlord, the jerry-builder, and the slum-owner. We have dealt, in the past, with other anti-social elements in our national life, and we must deal with these. The evil must be remedied without further delay. That much of it has been wrought *unconsciously*, landowners and speculative builders in the industrial centres having only followed the

[1] "Practical Housing," p. 3.

customary and legal course of action, may be frankly admitted. But the community has to see to it that *in future* it shall be able to protect itself against methods which have proved so disastrous to the welfare of its citizens as a whole.

(*b*) But we must add a word or two on the more generally recognised evil of over-crowding, which, of course, is largely induced by "over-housing." And here, too, it is unnecessary to produce statistics. The evil is too well known to town dwellers—yes, and to those who will look round a little in our villages—to need demonstration. Mr. Booth tells us of "one street in Southwark where there are eight hundred people living in thirty-six houses." [1] If this had been an isolated instance a great deal of public indignation might, perhaps, have been aroused. But the fact is that this state of affairs is more or less normal in all our large towns and not merely incidental to the metropolis. The Physical Deterioration Report, in 1904, told us that "in certain districts of Edinburgh no less than 45 per cent. of the population . . . live in one-roomed or two-roomed dwellings," [2] and that "in the Staffordshire Potteries . . . more than two bedrooms in a house are rarely to be found, and these houses

[1] "Life and Labour," final vol. p. 180.
[2] § 112.

are sometimes occupied by eight adults." [1] Since this Report was issued improvement has, of course, been going on. Too high praise cannot be given to such cities as Liverpool, Manchester, and Birmingham (to name only a few), which are really striving to deal with this problem. The new Housing and Town Planning Act will make impossible some of the evils hitherto unchecked by legislation, *e.g.*, back-to-back houses, &c. But its chief recommendation is that for the first time a definite policy of town-planning and development is possible to every growing centre of population. The promise of this for the future is real and great. But the ills resulting from overcrowding in the past are, unfortunately, not so easily to be cured, and every large town is face to face with them. Whilst the worker must live, for a hundred and one reasons, near his or her work, the pressure upon the centre of our cities will remain.

We have now seen something of the extent of the housing question. What does all this mean to the woman worker? Figures will not tell us much of the conditions which face those who are practically concerned with the housing problem. It is probably only too true that one half of the world has no real knowledge of how the other half lives. But fortunately we have patient and reliable

[1] § 114.

workers in the social field who, thoroughly conversant with the conditions under which the people are living, are able to give us true pictures of life in the various strata of society. We will give one or two typical sketches by such writers, and leave our readers to add their own comments. First, of a London "home"; and of the metropolis, as of many of our other large centres, we must remember that "the private family house of the early part of last century has now become a 'tenement house,' a house let in lodgings. This transformation is, indeed, one of the most profound changes which have affected the housing of the people of London; for not only has it made an enormous difference in density of population per house, but *it has materially altered the domestic habits of the people*."[1] Here are two pictures of such tenements, one a two-roomed and the other a one-roomed tenement, as given by the author of "Life and Labour of the People in London"[1]:

"The front door, with its separate number and knocker, opens out of the front room into a common open balcony; and the back door out of the back room into a tiny private balcony, about a yard or so square, leading to the sink, &c. These little balconies are often turned to good account with flower-boxes and hanging baskets, and one woman had rigged up a pigeon-house, and kept pigeons very successfully there. Each tenement is complete in

[1] "The Health of the State." Dr. Geo. Newman, p. 165.

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itself, except for the want of a tap; to fetch water the tenants have to take their buckets to a common tap on each balcony. The asphalted court provides a large and safe playground for the children, and the flat roof is utilised for wash-houses and a drying ground."—First Series, vol. iii. p. 37.

"*One-roomed Tenements.*—. . . Buildings. The room is about 12 feet square and is fitted with a range with an oven. By the side of the fireplace a copper is built. There are no cupboards, only a place for coals. There is a sink and two closets on the landing for the use of the seven tenements on the floor. When seen, this room was occupied by a man, his wife, and five children, or rather four children, for one was in the hospital. . . . The rent was 3s. 6d. a week."—First Series, vol. iii. p. 22.

Now let us see what typical working-women's homes in a fair-sized provincial city are like.

Mr. B. Seebohm Rowntree, in his study of the conditions of York, classifies the houses of the working-classes as follows:

CLASS I.—*Houses of the well-to-do artisans, equal to 12 per cent. of the working-class families in the city.*

These houses are all in the newer parts of the city. They are situated in streets of a moderate width, about 30 to 35 feet. The chief feature of this class of house is "the best parlour," a time-honoured, though somewhat useless, institution of the more prosperous working-class population. "The sitting-room often contains a piano and an overmantel in addition to the usual furniture. . . . It is chiefly used on Sundays, or as a receiving-room for visitors who are not on terms sufficiently intimate to be asked into the kitchen. Occasionally it is used by the husband when he has writing to do

in connection with friendly or other societies, or by the children when practising music. The real living-room is the kitchen, rendered cheerful and homely by the large open grate. . . . Upstairs there are three bedrooms, two of them provided with fireplaces. . . . Few working-men's houses in York are fitted with a bath." (Rents, about 7s. 6d. per week.)

CLASS II.—*Houses occupied principally by those in receipt of moderate but regular wages, representing 62 per cent. of the working-class families.*

"The streets in which these houses are situated are narrower; many of them are dull and dreary. The street door opens straight into the living-room. This room combines the uses of parlour and kitchen. It is fitted with open range and oven, and all the cooking is done here. The floor is either of tiles or boards covered with linoleum. A table, two or three chairs, a wooden easy-chair, and perhaps a couch, covered with American cloth, complete the furniture of the room. . . . Upstairs there are two bedrooms, reached by stairs leading in some cases from the kitchen, in others from the scullery. It is to be regretted that many houses in Class II. are jerry-built, with thin walls of porous and damp-absorbing bricks, put together with inferior mortar, and with wood so 'green' that after a short time floors, window-frames and doors shrink, and admit draughts and dust." (Rents 4s. to 5s. per week.)

CLASS III.—*The Slum Houses.*

"These houses are less uniform in general plan than those in Class II. Many have only two or three rooms, and scarcely any more than four. Their dingy walls add gloom to the narrow streets, and the absence of all architectural relief conveys a sense of depression—often the closet accommodation is both inadequate and insanitary. The water

supply is very inadequate, one tap being often the sole supply for a very large number of houses. Dirty windows, broken panes frequently stuffed with rags or pasted over with brown paper, and a general appearance of dilapidation and carelessness, reveal the condition and character of the tenants. Inside, the rooms are often dark and damp, and almost always dirty. Many of the floors are of red bricks, or bricks that would be red if they were washed. They are often uneven and much broken, having been laid on to the earth with no concrete or other foundation. On washing-days pools of water collect, which gradually percolate through to the damp and unsavoury soil below." [1]

Now let us look at the "home" which is also the workroom. It will be seen that such rooms must be near the industrial centre and that this fact tends to press the rent up far above the value of the accommodation given. Fancy prices are often asked, and, in many cases, given for rooms where homework, which must be done in the neighbourhood, can be carried on. Time has to be saved; more important still, money cannot be spared for travelling, and so the crowding of the home-worker tends to increase at the centre of our cities. Here is a description of the room of such a worker:

"In an extremely uninviting street off Commercial Road we visited a middleman whose workroom was built out at the back, across an ill-paved yard. In the yard pools of dirty water were lying, cats and

[1] *Cf.* "Poverty," ch. vi.

chickens were walking about, and close to the door of the workroom were two water closets, one for men and one for women, separate as the law directs, but absolutely contiguous, so that while the letter of the regulation was observed, that privacy which is its object was entirely disregarded. . . . Yet the rental of this singularly undesirable abode (which may have contained six rooms, none large) was 28s. a week." [1]

It is quite certain that this man and his family, engaged in their incessant home toil, will not enjoy the 250 cubic feet of air space with which those working in factories and workshops are to be provided, according to the Factory Acts. Nor should we forget that this 250 cubic feet must be increased, by these regulations, to 400 cubic feet in the case of women who are working overtime or in any workshops used as sleeping rooms.

We will add two other short word-pictures descriptive of the home of the "sweated" woman. Speaking of the rooms where the shirt-finishers live, Miss Margaret H. Irwin says :

"One often finds in the worst of these homes that the woollen shirts, shawls, and other articles of clothing on which the workers have been engaged during the day are used as coverings for the sick, or to act at night as bedclothes for the members of the family generally. . . . It is difficult to give any adequate idea of the dreary squalor of many of these

[1] *Cf.* ch. x. "Makers of our Clothes."

places which have to serve both as home and workshop, and which do not possess the most elementary requirements of either. What must inevitably be the condition of both personal and domestic cleanliness in cases where five or six persons are crowded together in a single apartment, which has to do duty as bedroom, kitchen, sitting-room, work-room, nursery, and frequently sick-room as well?"[1]

Again, referring to "Sack Sewing," Miss Irwin says :

"Without exception the houses of all the sack-sewers visited were indescribably filthy. Some of them were entirely destitute of furniture, and in others the sacks, dirty and vermin-infested, would be used at night for bed and bedclothes. A woman was found occupying what is known in Glasgow as a 'farmed-out furnished house.' It consisted of a single apartment, containing a bed and a few miserable sticks of furniture. For this she was paying five shillings a week. The rent of this *unfurnished* would have been eight shillings a *month!*"[2]

A striking example of the inevitable extravagance and general helplessness to which these poorest of our women workers are doomed in consequence of the miserably low wages which they receive!

We will give, as our last illustration, a

[1] See article on "Shirt Finishing" in the "Sweated Industries Handbook," published by the *Daily News*. The articles and illustrations in this little book are most valuable.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 40.

description by Mr. L. G. Chiozza Money of a home of an East End pipe-maker :

"This worker has a tiny house in a Bow alley, for which she pays five shillings per week. There are three tiny rooms and a little yard measuring about nine feet square. This yard is indispensable, for the pipes, after they have been moulded in the press and sufficiently dried, must be fired. A small rude kiln does this with more or less effect. Fuel, of course, is costly, and often there is much work spoiled. The front room, the broken window of which looks out upon the crowded alley, is about six feet square. This is the factory and living-room. Here the children help or hinder, the little ones playing with the clay, the older ones playing in deadly earnest. It is when the children are got to bed that their mother often does the best part of her day's work, sometimes pursuing her business far into the night."[1]

Such are the places where all too many of the articles of clothing which we wear are being made. Even the better-style blouse or high-priced shirt may come from the hands of the "sweated" woman worker, for, unfortunately, it is not only cheap articles which are sweated. It is true that some steps have been taken by the new Act to deal with this great evil, an evil which works such terrible havoc in the ranks of the woman worker. But much needs yet to be done. And the responsibility still lies, as it always must lie in this matter, with the general con-

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 51.

sumer—that is, with you and with me. We are only very slowly learning that there is as true an ethics of *purchase* as there is of *production*. We, the general public, must buy wisely if we would have our commodities produced rightly.

CHAPTER III

"LIVING-IN" AND WOMEN'S HOSTELS, HOMES, ETC.

"The fairly prosperous Utopian belongs, in most cases, to one or two residential clubs of congenial men and women. These clubs usually possess in addition to furnished bedrooms more or less elaborate suites of apartments, and if a man prefers it one of these latter can be taken and furnished according to his personal taste."—H. G. WELLS, *A Modern Utopia.*

IN our last chapter we looked at some typical working-class homes as described by those who may be called specialists on this question. The effects of some of the evil conditions which we found to be prevalent hardly need to be pointed out. It will not be necessary, for instance, to dwell upon what Mr. Sidney Webb truly describes as "the soul-destroying conditions of the one-roomed home." No one will venture to controvert the statement made not long since in the *British Medical Journal* that "it cannot be in accordance with the requirements of civilised life that all the func-

tions of family life should be carried on in a single-roomed dwelling." And yet we have to face the fact that large numbers of our women workers, especially widows who are home-workers, not only sleep in such dwellings, but *rarely go out of them*, to get the fresh air and exercise necessary for health. And even where there are two, three or four rooms in the woman worker's dwelling there is a great deal of overcrowding, as we have already seen. Mr. Charles Booth goes so far as to say, of some parts of the metropolis, that "crowding is the *main* cause of drink and vice." Evidence has been given again and again before Royal Commissions as to the extent and dangers of overcrowding. Here is one of many such official statements :

"There is undoubtedly great deterioration in the physique of our city population, and this is attributable to two chief causes, first a decadence in home life, which entails improper food and clothing, irregular habits (drinking and gambling), absence of order and thrift ; second, the miserable housing and high rents which prevail ; overcrowding, with its consequences, is an important factor in physical and mental degeneration."[1]

We have quoted this statement because it attributes the grave evil of physical deterioration to two sources, both of which are to be found in the home. That this state of affairs affects

[1] Physical Deterioration Report, § 110.

the industrial efficiency of the woman worker must be readily seen. It was stated before the Royal Commission on Housing (1884), that every worker living in our overcrowded industrial centres lost at least twenty days in the year from physical exhaustion due to the conditions under which he lived when "at home." How much truer still this must be as regards women and girl workers, those who employ them would be able to testify. One of the professed reasons for the lowness of the woman's wage is the fact that she has to be absent from her work, owing to physical inability, far more than has her brother industrial. The moral and social degradation resulting from overcrowding—yes, and even from that general sordidness and dinginess which are the marked features of the housing accommodation of the masses [1]—is as obvious as it is deplorable. With the common bedroom shared by growing lads with their sisters and, in only too many cases, the same bed shared by a parent with the elder children, what chances are there that the decencies of life will be observed? With one water supply to twenty, thirty, and even forty dwellings, with one sanitary convenience for four, five, and even eight houses,[2] how great the tempta-

[1] *Cf.* "The Example of Germany," T. C. Horsfall, p. 21.
[2] *Cf.* "Housing in Manchester and Salford," T. R. Marr, pp. 44 and 46.

tion to uncleanliness and impurity! What wonder is it that many of our working lads and girls grow up with a dulled sense of shame and with propensities already active for doing wrong? It says volumes for the innate goodness and respectability of the mass of the people that such conditions do not breed more moral evil than they do. Every one who knows the slums knows that a wonderful cleanliness and the strictest probity are to be found in many an overcrowded house. Even the one-roomed tenement is, in countless instances, a true *home*. And the chances are ten to one, in such instances, that this is due to the gracious influence of some industrious woman worker.

Referring, now, to the classification of our first chapter, we roughly divided, it will be remembered, the women workers as follows:

1. Those who were engaged in "professional" occupations: doctors, nurses, teachers, students, &c.
2. Clerks, warehouse-girls, typists, &c.
3. Shop assistants.
4. Domestic servants.
5. Girls working in factories and workshops.
6. Home-workers, charwomen, hawkers, and "casuals" generally.

We have already given descriptions of the homes where, most probably, those in classes 4, 5, and 6 will live. We except, however,

the lowest strata of class 6, of which we shall be speaking later. The great majority of our factory women and girls will live in such homes of their own or will be lodged with friends or relatives who live in such homes. Those who take up domestic service, too, will come from some similar homes to these. But the great majority of servants live in the houses where they are engaged, and these will be housed considerably better, in many cases vastly better, than they are at home. This is one of the great advantages of domestic service. It gives the girl who, perhaps, has come from quite a rough home, an insight into a well-ordered and comfortable household, a unit of which household she becomes. The clean and usually comfortable bedroom, the warm and roomy kitchen are only the visible part of the gain in surroundings to the domestic servant. She has the moral advantage of coming into close and oftentimes really friendly contact with a woman who has had better opportunities than herself and who, therefore, it is to be hoped, has much to teach her. That these are real advantages in numberless instances can scarcely be questioned. Unfortunately girls will not put themselves into the way of securing these advantages because the conditions of domestic service are so ill-defined and capable of gross misuse.

We have now to inquire as to the housing conditions of our class 3, the shop assistants. The vast majority of women shop assistants are occupied in the drapery and allied trades. It is a significant fact that whilst 49 per cent. of men assistants in these trades are less than 25 years old, actually 65 per cent. of the women assistants are below that age. There seems considerable reason, at first sight, for the contention that these hosts of young girls need some oversight, and that, therefore, the "living in" system has much to be said for it upon moral grounds. Let us, however, look at the matter in some detail, for it is a question which vitally affects large numbers of women workers. We must first notice that this system, although general in London and many of our large provincial towns, is by no means universal in Great Britain. It is practically unknown, for example, in Scotland, where the great majority of men and women assistants of all trades live with their families or in lodgings. On the other hand, in Wales practically all shop assistants live in. In Liverpool, too, the majority live in, but in Bradford practically all live out. In other towns, such as Manchester, both systems are in vogue.

Another point to be borne in mind is the fact that in other trades, at least those in which men assistants are engaged, the living-

in system is gradually disappearing, notably in the grocery trade. There is, too, a great feeling against the system amongst the assistants, of both sexes and all trades, who are organised in trade unions. The National Union of Shop Assistants, for instance, is very strong in condemnation of the system and boldly advocates its total abolition. On the other hand, it is only fair to add that amongst the unorganised assistants, especially amongst the women, there is considerable support given to its continuance.

Perhaps our best course will be to give one or two typical examples of the way these women assistants are housed and then to look at the chief objections urged against "living-in." Mr. T. Spencer Jones, the editor of *The Shop Assistant,* writes thus :

"The girls employed at a world-famous establishment in London are 'dossed'—it is the most expressive word I can think of to convey a clear idea of their sleeping quarters—in two terraces in a 'blind' street, much on the same plan as paupers are housed in Cottage or Scattered Homes under the Poor Law, with this great difference. The basis of the pauper's cottage is the 'divine idea of home,' while the shop girls' terraces are dormitories pure and simple. They are the pens where the industrial sheep are herded at night.

"The girls who have their sleeping quarters in one terrace are not allowed to visit the girls in the terrace opposite. The groups are under separate management—one housekeeper to each terrace of

about a dozen houses—and at the entrance to the street a commissionaire, known as the 'Green-man,' keeps guard."[1]

It is true that we have to remember that what applies to large business-houses will not equally apply to smaller ones. But this is a fact which has a double significance. There may be a touch of "home" in the smaller houses, it is true, but the chances are that there will be less cubic space and less hygienic conditions generally than in the larger but more barrack-like houses. Miss Clementina Black thus describes the interior of one of these houses[2]:

"The dormitory in which she occupies a place is bare and unhomelike, all the beds, chairs, and chests of drawers of the same pattern; the walls unadorned, for the decoration of them is forbidden. As the rule of one large establishment says, with equal harshness and bad grammar: 'No pictures, photos, &c., allowed to disfigure the walls. Any one so doing will be charged with the repairs.' The room is chill in winter and stuffy at all seasons, and her companions are chosen by chance. The young lady hurries down to breakfast in a dining-room which has the same impersonal, depressing character as the dormitory. Too often it is a basement room, and sometimes infested by blackbeetles. Here, among a crowd of companions, she takes her meal, consisting in the great majority of cases of bread and butter and weak tea.[2]

[1] "The Moral Side of Living-in," p. 6.
[2] "Sweated Industry," Miss C. Black, p. 48.

This is probably a faithful picture of the accommodation which the average woman assistant in our large towns secures. It cannot be called absolutely bad, but it certainly cannot be called good. Its negative quality is its strongest condemnation. But we will give an example of what the system may be at its worst. Some years ago a case was heard before the Lord Chief Justice in Dublin as to the right of a shop-assistant to the Parliamentary vote. A shopman, who had had many years' experience in the West End, was called to give evidence, and the following dialogue between him and the Lord Chief Justice ensued :

"Many of the girls employed by —— are farmed in houses rented by the firm in streets frequented by bad men and worse women. These houses are adapted to the purpose on the cubicle system ; girls of all ages are crowded together in small box-like bedrooms, without, in many cases, windows. There is no fresh air, no proper conveniences for cleanliness, and there is no one in charge except the watchman at the door."

"Do you wish me to understand that there is no housekeeper ?"

"Yes ! Their food is provided on the business premises. The houses I am speaking about are simply sleeping places. They cannot compare with Rowton Houses, where one may obtain a private cubicle, light, fire, all utensils for cooking, and splendid lavatory accommodation for 3s. 6d. a week —seven days."

"Are there no sitting-rooms in the dormitories you refer to ?"

"Yes, there is a room which is called by that name underground, the cellar of the house, without a fireplace or a stove."

"Do the girls spend much of their time after business in the dormitories?"

"Not if they can help it. They never stay in unless they are hard up. In that respect they are like the men. If they have a few shillings to spare they gad about town, when they cannot afford to go to a place of amusement, and some of them drive up to the dormitories in hansoms at closing-time."

"That is a remarkable statement you have just made. Am I to infer anything to the discredit of the girls from it?"

"All shop girls are not angels," was the laconic reply.

"What about locking up time? Who attends to this? Is it possible for a girl to get in after the door is closed?"

"The watchman locks up and then walks away with the key in his pocket!"

"What! Do you mean to say the place is locked up like a hencoop at night, and that no one can get in or out after the watchman has done his duty?"

"Not unless they get in or out through the windows."

"How many girls are placed under lock and key in this way?"

"About thirty perhaps in each dormitory."

"And what are your conclusions as to the result of these remarkable 'safeguards'?"

"Well, I have come to the conclusion that factory girls have a better opportunity of living a moral life than most of the girls compelled to live in. The former are not tempted to cultivate expensive habits in the way of dress and amusements; they are not exposed to brutal insults and outrages at the hands of their overseers; and, what is all-important, they

have homes in which to spend their evenings. In the underground sitting-room I have mentioned there are not sufficient chairs for all the girls to sit down if they wanted to stay in any night."[1]

The chief objections against this system were carefully reviewed by the Inter-Departmental Committee on the Truck Acts, which reported in January, 1909. They are given in that Report as four in number: 1. Many assistants object, and it seems to us object rightly, that "living-in" should be made, as it practically is in London and many other large towns, a condition of employment. "It gives the employer the right to dictate how at least half the salary of his employees shall be spent. It obliges them to live in a certain place in order to get the work at all, and it obliges them to live up to a certain standard."[2] Living-in is a relic of the apprenticeship system, and as such is antiquated, if nothing worse can be urged against it. The Minority Report of the above Committee, signed by Mrs. Tennant and Mr. Stephen Walsh, M.P., regards this one objection as sufficient to condemn it. It says:

"A system where workers are compelled to lodge and board in a particular place must, in itself, stand

[1] Quoted in "The Moral Side of Living-in," p. 9.
[2] "Women and the Living-in System." Pamphlet by National Union of Shop Assistants (122, Gower Street, W.C.).

condemned, whether that place be owned and controlled by the employer or by any other person. However bad the accommodation may be, the assistants have no power to retaliate by removing to a rival establishment."—Minority Report (3).

If this system cannot be justified on other and more important grounds, it seems to us that it stands convicted on this count alone.

2. The second objection urged before the Committee was that the board and lodging provided, not in one or two instances, but in many and conspicuous cases, were neither adequate nor suitable. Although the majority of the Committee were not convinced that this was generally so, we may give a typical instance of the accommodation provided, selected from the mass of evidence which we have read. With the question of the food provided we have no space to deal, though this is an equally important matter :

"A very long block in one street contains sixteen rooms divided only by half partitions, about 2 feet spaces at top and 6 to 8 inches at bottom. The wash-basins are fixed upon shelves, and in the sections containing three beds there is not enough floor space to enable the three girls to dress at the same time. At one of these houses some large rooms contain eight beds per room. In the men's quarters the overcrowding is even greater."—Q. 13,274, vol. iii.

What we have said as to crowding in the

previous chapter equally applies here, with the additional force that it cannot even be called crowding *at home!* There is also the question of how such conditions of living-in react upon the public health. The members of the Committee who signed the Minority Report emphasise this point. They say: "We received striking evidence of the injury to health which arises from compulsory association in bedrooms with phthisical companions." This surely is a matter inquiry into which should be pushed further.

3. But the third objection brought before the notice of the Committee is by far the most serious. Again and again it was stated by witnesses that so far from the living-in system acting in the direction of moral restraint it actually conduced to immorality. The striking illustration we have already given of the condition of some of the West End establishments seems to confirm this grave charge. Here is the actual experience, given in evidence before the Committee, of Miss Margaret Bondfield, herself once a shop assistant and now one of the Secretaries of the National Union of Shop Assistants:

"My sleeping-room was on the ground floor, with the window facing on to the street, so that one could step into the street from the window, and back into the room from the street, without going through the door at all. I was put into a room with a woman

of mature age who led a life of a most undesirable kind; that was my first experience of a living-in house. There was another girl in the same room who was suffering from consumption. I was in that house for three years, and I could have been out any night during those three years without the firm knowing anything about it."—Q. 13,216, vol. iii.

It seems, from the evidence adduced, that no sort of real supervision is possible, nor even attempted, in many of the large business houses. That young girls, newly come from homes in the country, should have to associate with such women as Miss Bondfield describes, being allowed at the same time a dangerous margin of liberty, is surely most undesirable. Mr. Derry, of the large drapery firm of Messrs. Derry and Toms (London), was called to give evidence, and he stated that his firm had already given up the system as far as the men assistants were concerned, as they were convinced that it was an unnecessary and undesirable one; that they had no intention of going back to it in regard to the men, and should be prepared to allow the women assistants to live out when the premises, which they now occupied over the shops, could be re-adapted without serious financial loss.[1] He affirmed emphatically that the so-called moral restraints of the living-in system were a delusion, and thought that even young

[1] § 189.

girls would be better off in properly selected lodgings. He concluded his evidence with the following significant statement:

"For my own part, if I had a boy or a girl, I would much rather see them properly lodged with a person that I could find out all about, than I would put them into a big (business) house of which I knew nothing."—Mr. Derry, Q. 17,880, vol. iii.

But there is another point. While it would be far from our intention to suggest that there is anything like a "prevalent immorality" amongst any class of shop assistants, it is certain that some of the rules of the living-in system offer great temptations, if not actual impulsion, to an irregular life. Take, for example, the regulation as to closing the dormitories. The universal rule in the drapery trade is: "*The house door is closed at eleven p.m.; on Saturday at twelve p.m. The gas will be turned out fifteen minutes later. Anyone having a light after that time will be discharged.*" To what a length this closing of the door is sometimes carried may be seen by the following instance, given in evidence before the Committee:

"At night she was sent to sleep in a very dirty, ill-furnished room, at 116 —— Road (London). Her bed gave way under her, and there was not enough bed-clothing to keep her warm. On *Saturday*

she was informed by the proprietor that he made no provision for his assistants on Sunday. They must leave their bedrooms at 10 a.m., and not return until 10 p.m. on Sunday night. He advised her to go to the Y.W.C.A. !"—Q. 13,274, vol. iii.

But even this is not the end of the mischief. Again and again girls have been locked out all night because they have arrived at their dormitory a few minutes after locking-up time. Miss Bondfield gave evidence on this subject as follows:

"I have personally known of cases of the door being kept shut. In the case of —— it used to be the invariable custom never to open the door under any circumstances, even if the assistants rang; but during the time I was there a girl who belonged to a fairly good family was locked out, and she ran the streets all night; she was terrified; she had no money, and she simply kept running; the next morning she came back she was absolutely ill from sheer exhaustion."—Q. 13,222, vol. iii.

Comment on this is unnecessary, and we will only quote the conclusion of the majority on the point. "We cannot too strongly condemn the practice of shutting out for the night an assistant who returns after the hour of locking up." On the moral side, then, the living-in system, it seems, must be condemned. It offers opportunities, if not actual inducements, to the most undesirable way pos-

sible of increasing the income. And when we remember the low wages which too many of these girls receive, we realise how strong are the temptations which face these women workers! It says much for shop assistants, as a class, that so few, comparatively speaking, yield to these temptations.

4. We shall do little more than record the fourth and last objection raised against this system by many of those who appeared before the Truck Committee. It was stated that it tends to deprive the assistants of that personal responsibility which managing their own affairs in the matter of board and lodging would give them. The men, too, cannot qualify for the Parliamentary or municipal suffrage, and the women lack opportunity for training themselves in those domestic duties which form so necessary a part of the woman worker's life. Mr. Debenham, a manager of another large drapery house in London, gave it as his opinion that the general *morale*, self-reliance, and cheerfulness of his assistants, both men and women, had certainly improved since living-in had been abolished (1905).[1] And there is little doubt but that the same result would follow its abolition elsewhere.

In face of these grave objections it is difficult to see why the majority of the Committee

[1] Cf. § 188.

should have reported on the system as they did.[1]

We cannot discuss here the pros and cons of its total abolition. But this was the bold recommendation of the Minority Report—that living-in should be made illegal after three years had been granted for making other arrangements. That such arrangements could be made can hardly be doubted. At Harrod's Stores, *e.g.*, living-in is unknown, and the results, as stated in evidence, are quite satisfactory.[2] That suitable lodgings could and would soon be found for all who needed them it is scarcely possible to doubt. How quickly an effective supply answers the demand is well known in the commercial world. It seems reasonable to suppose that the £25 to £30 per annum increase of salary to those assistants who had now to live out could be paid by most of the business houses concerned, and that the adaptation of premises, where necessary, would not be an insuperable

[1] They recommended (i) that regulations as to accommodation for shop assistants should be drawn up by some central authority, especially condemning the shutting out of assistants at night;

(ii) That the present Act dealing with the sale and purchase of unfit food should be extended so as to protect shop assistants in this direction;

And (iii) that the inspectors of the local authority who already inspect business premises under the Shop Hours Act should be responsible for general inspection of the conditions under which assistants live.

[2] Cf. § 190.

difficulty. But we cannot do better, in finishing what we have to say on this question, than to quote the final conclusion which the Minority Report records[1]:

"Were the system abolished, the situation so created would be met, we believe, in three ways:

"1. By a reduction in the number of young people sent by their parents from a distance;

"2. By the placing of those so sent with friends or relations, or in suitable lodgings;[1]

"3. By the greater employment of young people in their own towns."

That each of these three results would be of the greatest benefit to shop assistants in general, and to women assistants in particular, we have no doubt.

We have, in concluding this chapter, to review the housing accommodation available for our two remaining classes of woman worker, viz., girl clerks, typists, &c., and those engaged in the "professional" occupations. Many of the former will come from much the same sort of lower middle or working-class homes as the shop assistants, and of this type of home we have said enough in the preceding pages. But for the "lady" clerk, typist, post-office girl, &c., as well

[1] One large firm in a town in Scotland keeps "a list of respectable lodgings," which any girl may consult on engaging herself as an assistant. She is not in any way bound, however, to live at any house in this list. But constant supervision of the lodgings where the girls elect to live is undertaken by this firm. See Report, § 191.

as for the nurse, non-residential teacher, student, &c., the housing question is a real and oftentimes a grave one. We will, very briefly, glance at this question. We shall pass by such schemes as the Adair House Flats for women workers and the recently erected "Associated Homes for Working Ladies" at the Garden Suburb, Hampstead, where a handsome flat, common dining hall, sitting-rooms, and recreation lawns can be enjoyed at from £1 16s. per month rent. We need not describe, either, such residential clubs for "professional" women workers as the Twentieth Century Club, Connaught Club, Beechwood Club, &c., which supply first-class accommodation and board for about £1 1s. a week, or even less. We will confine ourselves to those hostels and homes where girl students, clerks, typists, &c., can be accommodated.

The following are examples of provision in London for this class of women workers. Inadequate as this accommodation in the metropolis is, in some of our great provincial towns, even towns which owe their prosperity to the woman worker, there is less. The problem, in truth, has never been considered!

Four residential clubs for working women have sprung up in Westminster in the last few years. These are for women earning from 18s. to 25s. per week. Hopkinson House, Vaux-

hall Bridge Road, accommodates 120. There are nine cubicles at 5s.; the rest range from 5s. 6d. to 7s. per week. Full board is 10s. 6d. (four meals a day). Similar to this is Brabazon House, in the same road. It was originally founded for girls employed in the post-office, and answered a pressing need. It accommodates 84 in cubicles, ranging from 6s. 6d. to 7s. 6d. per week. There is a long list of women waiting for admission. "I refused," says the superintendent, "359 written applications in twelve months, and as many personal ones." Across Vincent Square is St. George's Club for women, built by Miss Murray Smith, daughter of the publisher. In this, however, "bed-sitting-rooms" are supplied at a higher price, *i.e.*, 13s. to 21s. weekly. At 35, St. George's Square is yet another, the Calanda Club, which occupies an ordinary dwelling-house, but is "full up" with twelve residents. But Westminster is not the only district in London where such clubs for working-women are needed. It is proposed to build a women's hostel in Marylebone Road, near Regent's Park. If 700 girls were refused in six months (1908) at Hopkinson House, what must the need be? These applicants would doubly fill the proposed hostel. But the question is, whence is the capital to come to erect it? An appeal is being made through the *Girls'*

Realm Guild. This Guild trains girls of the higher classes to earn their living, and every year it has more difficulty in finding suitable accommodation for its candidates. It is proposed to accommodate about 240 persons, including staff, and this will require an expenditure of £33,878. Residents would pay sufficient to return 6⅔ per cent. on capital. It has been decided to limit dividends to 4½ per cent. and to put the remainder to a reserve fund. In an Appendix [1] will be found the carefully estimated cost, showing that success is assured, as the estimate is worked out from known figures. But how few care to find capital for women's hostels! And it is quite certain that women who have to work for their living cannot raise this capital to supply their own need.

A large bequest was made by Mrs. Lewis Hill for women's lodging-houses or hostels, but so far all inquiries of the trustees have only elicited the reply that the money is "locked up," and that securities have not turned out as expected; and though more than two years have passed, no action seems to have been taken.[2]

[1] Appendix I.

[2] In New York, Trowmart Inn was erected by Wm. R. Martin, millionaire, for working women, under thirty-five, earning less than £3 weekly. Three hundred are accommodated in a three-storey building. This has proved to be quite self-supporting.

The "John Shrimpton" Homes (headquarters, 3, Victoria Street, S.W.) are a small but interesting experiment. They are about nine in number, including one for Germans, and charge from 10s. 6d. per week. Girls make their own beds and keep their rooms tidy. The closing time is 10.30. There is a useful Sick Fund of 1d. per week, entitling to twenty-one days' free medicine and 1s. per day for fourteen days. These homes are principally used by West End business girls, and as many as 830 made use of them in one year.

Kent House (91, Great Portland Street, W.) gives a good cubicle, with breakfast and supper, for 14s. per week. But the following are much cheaper, though, of course, for a rather different class of girls :

The Soho Club, 59, Greek Street, Soho (Hon. Maude Stanley), supplies cubicles at 4s. per week, and also cheap food.

The Pimlico Ladies' Association (31, Cumberland Street, Pimlico) takes ladies at 1s. per day, and Chelsea has a similar home.

For Jewish girls the Jewish "Sarah Pyke" House (45, Great Prescot Street, Whitechapel, 1s. per day), and the Emily Harris Home for working-girls (Alfred Place, Tottenham Court Road ; accommodation, 40) are available.

Swiss or French girls are received at Swiss

House, 35, Fitzroy Square, which is *subsidised by the Swiss Government;* French girls only at 9, Soho Square.

Victoria Hostel, 17 and 19, Newington Causeway, E., receives English and foreign girls from 3s. 6d. per cubicle.

The British Women's Temperance Association has a House of Help, New Kent Road, where women are received for 6d. a night, or 3s. 6d. per week.

The two Church Army Homes (12s. 6d. and 9s. 6d. per week) have been already mentioned. The Hostel is at 131, Uxbridge Road, and accommodates 28. The Boarding House, 32, Nutford Place, is for 21 women.

The Girls' Friendly Society Lodges cost in London from 7s. 6d. weekly. There are 60 lodges in England, Scotland, and Wales.

The Y.W.C.A. has 27 homes in London, and one for barmaids only. The terms are from 8s. 6d. to 30s. per week—usually 12s. 6d. to 15s.

The Girls' Guild, in connection with the National Council of Free Churches, also has homes at Bristol, Reading, Oxford, Halifax, &c. The charge for board and lodging is about 8s. 6d. a week ; bed only, 2s. 6d.

Some idea of how inadequately these homes must supply the total need may be gathered from the report of the pressure of *one profession* on the accommodation pro-

vided. In a report entitled "House Full" funds are asked for the enlargement of The Theatrical Home, 92 and 121, Charlotte Street, Fitzroy Square. The writer says:

"A voice trial is announced to take place at one of the large London theatres, and to that ordeal hundreds of girls gather." A plea is raised to shelter *15 more!* "Not for work have our applicants appealed, but for somewhere respectable to stay whilst looking for employment, or during rehearsals, and only those who know the hardships of theatrical life can realise what such a home is to a girl, where she can turn, after the day and night work is over, for rest, refreshment, recreation, sympathy, and solace."

Probably this could be written of the workers in many other professions.

It is the aim of The National Association for Women's Lodging Homes to compile by degrees a complete list of all such places throughout the country *where women can safely live*.

In the Appendix[1] will be found a full statement of the aims of this Association, and all details in respect to it.

[1] Appendix II. and Appendix IX.

CHAPTER IV

THE WORKHOUSE AND THE CASUAL WARD FOR WOMEN

"The whole framework of Society compared to what it might be is as the hut of a savage to a Grecian temple."—SIR J. R. SEELEY.

WE have now described the home of the woman worker—from the residential club of the woman engaged in some form of professional occupation to the one room of the "sweated" worker. But we have yet to deal with the accommodation provided for pauper women. These are not few in number. During the year 1906-7, 618,673 women received relief from the Poor Law authorities. This represents 36 per cent. of the total number of paupers for that year. But the percentage is higher for any one day, and the average duration of relief for women is longer than it is for men. On any selected day it would probably be found that nearly half of the number of paupers relieved would be women. Thus on January 1, 1908, 343,825

women were in receipt of Poor Law relief, or 43 per cent. of the whole body of paupers. Of this host of women who were in receipt of relief, by far the greater number, however, were "outs," viz., 270,096—the remaining 73,729 receiving relief in some form of Poor Law institution.

I. There are, then, somewhere near a quarter of a million of women in this country permanently in receipt of "outdoor" relief, and this is one of the serious questions of our great Poor Law problem. The fact that there are fully a million more women in the land than there are men does not at all account for this great preponderance of women over men in the receipt of Poor Law relief. Of this more than a quarter of a million of "out" paupers relieved on January 1, 1908, no less than 36,166 were widows, upon whom were dependent 100,986 children. This is a most significant fact. After the sick and the aged have been accounted for, there is a large, and probably increasing, body of women who, because of dependants upon them, *i.e.*, children, crippled husbands, sick relatives, &c., are forced to seek outdoor relief to keep the home together. These women are "able-bodied," but they cannot earn sufficient to keep themselves and those dependent upon them. Our economic conditions are such that the woman worker's wages are only enough for the worker

herself. If she have any dependent upon her she must seek outside help to increase her income. Consequently, as the Minority Report of the Poor Law Commission tells us, "nineteen-twentieths of the outdoor relief granted to physically competent persons is given to women." [1] This fact receives additional significance when we consider the class of woman worker who suffers most from unemployment.

"The vast majority of the cases of suffering and distress among women are those of mothers of families, who have either no husbands, or whose husbands are, for one reason or another, not at work, or are not earning enough to maintain them and the children. It is upon these unfortunate mothers, who are driven to engage in industrial work, without technical training, encumbered by home ties and responsibilities, and desperately anxious to make up the family livelihood, that the main burden of the suffering of unemployment falls." [2]

This report also tells us that there were in England and Wales alone on January 1, 1907, 62,240 healthy, able-bodied adult persons (other than the occupants of the casual ward) simultaneously in receipt of outdoor relief on that day.

"Of these only 2,528 were men, and no fewer than 59,712 women. In a small number of cases—we doubt whether they come to 5 per cent. of the

[1] Minority Report, pt. ii. ch. i. (iv.).
[2] *Ibid.*, pt. ii. ch. iv. (D).

59,712—these persons are single women, without children, not aged, and not distinctly ill or crippled." [1]

Let us glance at the conditions under which relief is given to these two distinct classes of women workers: (1) Women with dependants, usually widows with children, and (2) single women without dependants.

(1) As is well known, the regulations governing the grant of out-relief differ in almost every Poor Law Union where such regulations exist. Most Boards of Guardians deal with every case of outdoor relief as it arises.[2] In some of these Unions the aim is professed of granting relief for past merit or present good conduct. In most Unions, those known to be of immoral or drunken habits will be refused relief, but there is an infinite variation in the interpretation of the regulations. By some Guardians widows who have only one or two children are denied relief. By others, relief will only be granted for a short period after widowhood, and when that has elapsed no further aid will be given. The Local Government Board has recommended (and in this recommendation the Majority Report concurs [3]) that no out-

[1] Minority Report, pt. ii. ch. i. (iv.).

[2] "So far as we have been able to ascertain, only two-fifths of the Unions have any rules at all, the remainder professing to deal with each case 'on its merits.'"—Minority Report, pt. ii. ch. i. (B).

[3] Majority Report, pt. iv. ch. vi. (6).

relief be granted to women deserted by their husbands within the first twelve months after desertion. But the regulations which especially concern us at present are those which insist on decent housing conditions. Relief is, by some Guardians, denied to those who are living "in premises reported by the Medical Officer of Health to be unfit for occupation, either from overcrowding, or from being kept in a filthy condition," or in a cottage or room "kept in a dirty or slovenly condition"—in fact, in any locality "reported by the sanitary officer as injurious to health" or "detrimental to the moral or physical welfare of the inmates." In some Unions these housing conditions are made so stringent that relief will not be granted to any living in common lodging-houses, on licensed premises, or even in "furnished rooms." Such regulations as these, if wisely enforced, can only tend to improve the conditions under which this large number of women "outs" live. Unfortunately this is but rarely the case. Sometimes the very fact that a woman is seeking the best accommodation which she can afford is used against her. The Majority Report tells us that—

"If Guardians think a woman is paying too much rent she is told to move to cheaper rooms. Sometimes this hastens deterioration by withdrawing the support of a respectable street and placing the

women and children in an unfavourable environment."—Part iv. § 279.

Where no regulations at all exist, as in the majority of Unions, or, if in existence, are not enforced, we are not surprised to find the state of affairs which the Minority Report, in particular, describes and condemns.

"We have seen homes thus maintained out of the public funds in a state of indescribable filth and neglect; the abodes of habitual intemperance and disorderly living; and this—as it grieves us above all to say—even in families in which the Boards of Guardians are giving outdoor relief to enable children to be reared."

They tell us that—

"Another Committee visited some thirty to forty out-relief cases. For the most part they are living in houses which reflect most serious discredit on the sanitary authority. The overcrowding is of such a kind that ordinary decency is impossible; both sanitary accommodation and water supply are most inadequate. . . . In one case a widow with children had been receiving relief for two years, although the Guardians had several times been informed that she was drinking. She subsequently became a prostitute, neglected her children, was prosecuted and imprisoned at the instance of the N.S.P.C.C. Her children were taken charge of by the Guardians, and it was on her release from gaol that the case came up—as to what should be done with the children. We could not help feeling that the lax grant of out-relief probably contributed to the moral ruin of this woman's life."[1]

[1] Minority Report, pt. ii. ch. i. (B).

The members of the Poor Law Commission who signed this report expressly state that it is by no means their view that this description of the conditions under which the women "outs" lived was true of all or even of the majority of such women. But they point out that that such conditions should be maintained and even created by the receipt of relief, as undoubtedly in many cases it is, is a grave state of affairs. It cannot be right that our Poor Law rates should be subsidising overcrowding, idleness, and immorality. In the interest of the community, in the interest of those who are being degraded, especially in the interest of the children who are the worst sufferers in such cases, reform here must be speedy and effectual.

"The gravest part of this indictment appeared to us to be the allegation that thousands of children, whose maintenance was being paid for out of public funds, were being brought up in homes such as have been described. . . . Our investigators estimate that the number of Poor Law children on January 1, 1908, in the very unsatisfactory homes of the third class, in England and Wales, is more than 30,000. The numbers of those in the fourth class, where the home is demonstrably wholly unfit for children, is no fewer than 20,000. We can add nothing to the force of these terrible figures." [1]

Nothing, surely, need be added to drive home the conviction that some change in our Poor

[1] Minority Report, pt. ii. ch. i. (B).

Law system, in this direction at least, is imperative.

(2) But we must say a word as to the single women who, without dependants, are unable to earn sufficient to live, even at the lowest standard, and hence turn to the Poor Law for relief. Here we touch again the serious question of the inadequate wages which obtain in all the lower grades of women's occupations. There is, here, a vicious circle of evil conditions for our women workers. The Minority Report points out that many of these workers receive Poor Law relief in aid of their wages, and this has established itself as an undesirable precedent. This fact, of course, tends to keep wages down, and thus the circle is complete. The Majority Report refers to this same question from another point of view :

"One of the most painful features of the present system of inadequate relief is the vast army of aged women, whom it keeps clinging to the skirts of industry at an age when they are quite unfit for work of any kind."—Pt. iv. § 287.

We may quote from this Report a sad picture of what, at its worst, this system of insufficient out-relief means to single industrial women. Here are the sort of persons which, in all too many cases, are being relieved :

"An old Irishwoman, moving feebly about a room crowded with dirty lumber, and herself in the last

stages of dirt and decrepitude. She gets 3s. relief, pays 2s. 3d. rent, and has no other income except when she can get lodgers ; she had two mill girls with her, one with a child, but the child was taken away with typhoid last week, and now she has no one. The place is hopelessly dirty and insanitary, and ought to be closed."

"A single woman lives with her sister and her husband in one room. She gets 4s. 6d. a week out-relief. It is a mystery where the single woman sleeps, as there is only one room and one bed."—Pt. iv. § 262.

We are not surprised, then, at the drastic conclusions which the Minority Report reaches in regard to out-relief.[1] The more cautious Majority Report has a strong recommendation on the granting of out-relief.

"We do urge that if relief be given, it should be used to raise the recipients out of their deplorable condition and to check the creation of another generation of paupers."—Pt. iv. § 264.

Those who signed this Report also recommended that the custom, prevailing in London, which obliges the relieving officer to inform the sanitary authority of all cases of overcrowding coming under his notice, should be made general throughout the country.[2] It would probably prove valuable in detecting a large amount of overcrowding which at present escapes the notice of the sanitary authorities.

[1] Minority Report, pt. i. ch. ii. (G).
[2] Majority Report, pt. iv. ch. vi., Recommendation 2.

II. But we have now to speak of the still more unfortunate women workers who, even with frequent grants of outdoor relief, cannot secure a livelihood and enter "the House." These are, at present, a much smaller number than is generally supposed. Able-bodied women without husbands or young children are nowadays scarcely to be found in the workhouses.

"Just at the time when the number of able-bodied men in the workhouse is seriously increasing, the number of able-bodied unencumbered women—at one time considerable—has fallen away to next to nothing. This is all the more significant in view of the fact that the number of able-bodied women, unencumbered with husbands or children, who are in receipt of outdoor relief is very small." [1]

It is certainly a satisfactory state of affairs as far as it goes, for no one who knows anything of the ordinary workhouse will consider it a desirable place for women, particularly for the honest but unfortunate woman worker, temporarily worsted in her struggle for a livelihood. The testimony of the matron of the Lambeth Workhouse on the influence of workhouse environment upon women is significant.

"Physically they improve, mentally they degenerate; varied employment helps to keep them interested in life, but it is not an absolute success. I consider

[1] Minority Report, pt. ii. ch. iv. (D).

that the older women have a bad influence on the girls."—Maj. Rep., Pt. iv. § 192.

In our large workhouses this environment is as bad as it possibly can be, and even in the country "houses" the evils of promiscuity are very apparent. We cannot do better than to quote the serious words of the Minority Report on this point:

"We have ourselves seen, in the larger workhouses, the male and female inmates, not only habitually dining in the same room in each other's presence, but even working individually, men and women together, in laundries and kitchens; and enjoying in the open yards and long corridors innumerable opportunities to make each other's acquaintance."

And even where there is little opportunity of the sexes mixing, the society which the women, when separated from the men, enjoy, is far from desirable. This is especially true as regards the younger women.

"In the female dormitories and day-rooms women of all ages, and of the most varied characters and conditions, necessarily associate together without any kind of constraint on their mutual intercourse. There are no separate bedrooms; there are not even separate cubicles. The young servant out of place, the prostitute recovering from disease, the feeble-minded woman of any age, the girl with her first baby, the unmarried mother coming in to be confined of her third or fourth bastard, the senile, the paralytic, the epileptic, the respectable deserted wife,

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the widow to whom outdoor relief has been refused, are all herded indiscriminately together." [1]

We cannot be surprised if women workers who have temporarily lost their footing in the economic world and have to seek this shelter during their period of enforced idleness should become demoralised. When they regain their position as wage earners once more, is it not more than likely that they will be worse off, mentally and morally, than when the misfortune of unemployment overtook them? It will be fortunate for the community if, after such experiences as the promiscuous workhouse has to offer them, these women do not permanently join the ranks of the pauper, the vagrant, and the vicious. No wonder that those who signed the Majority Report exclaim :

"It seemed to us scandalous that local apathy should be allowed to condemn young girls to be put to sleep with women, admitted by the master to be frequently of bad character." [2]—Pt. iv. § 190.

This, then, is the sort of accommodation which the destitute woman worker who is

[1] Minority Report, pt. i. ch. i. (A).

[2] While this is a true picture of *small* workhouses, there are few large workhouses in which there is not a considerable amount of sorting of the able-bodied women. The better ones are often taken as "officers' servants" or "ward maids." They may thus learn habits of cleanliness and industry, and come out better disciplined and better trained.

offered "the House" has to face. Of the 73,729 women who were, on January 1, 1908, in Poor Law institutions, it is reassuring to know that there were, comparatively speaking, very few able-bodied women. But we must remember that in many Unions there is a regular practice of allowing both men and women to go out, at stated intervals, in search of work. There has thus grown up a distinct class of "ins and outs," amongst which must be reckoned some of our women workers. The evils of this practice, though hidden, are very real.[1]

Another part of the workhouse proper, to which we must, in a word, refer before passing on to the casual ward, is the lying-in ward. We shall not speak of the workhouse infirmary, whether it be part of the workhouse itself, as is the case in most of the smaller unions, or a separate institution, as is becoming increasingly common in our large towns. It does not affect, except indirectly, the subject we have in hand, for we are dealing with the able-bodied woman. But there is no doubt that the lying-in wards of our workhouses are being used, and used more and more, by women workers. It is perhaps true that "a very large proportion of the births which take place in the workhouse are illegitimate," and "that a premium is put upon illegitimacy

[1] See Chapter VI. p. 116.

by the ease with which the mothers of illegitimate children are admitted to the lying-in wards." [1] But the fact remains that no less than 30 per cent. of the women who used these wards in 1907, throughout England and Wales, were married women, and that this figure rises to 40 and even 50 per cent. in some of our large cities. The Minority Report tells us that—

"It has in some districts become common, we are informed, for the wives of unemployed but respectable working-class men to resort to the workhouse for their lying-in, in order to escape the ordeal of another confinement with no money coming in." [2]

It is not true, then, that these wards are solely used by prostitutes and feeble-minded girls at regular intervals. There is to be found in them a considerable element of respectable if unfortunate womanhood. Nor must we forget that many of the mothers of the illegitimate children are respectable women who, through some sudden temptation or misfortune, are paying the penalty of a first and only fall. Women workers such as domestic servants, music-hall artistes, laundresses, &c., make up the number of this sad company.

The evil environment of the workhouse, of which we have already spoken, is ten times

[1] Majority Report, pt. viii. §§ 150–1.
[2] Minority Report, pt. i. ch. iii. (A) (ii.).

more evil for such women coming to the lying-in wards. Promiscuity and idleness are the two chief features of this environment. The Viceregal Commission on Poor Law Reform in Ireland recorded :

"In a large number of workhouses can be found in the same ward young girls awaiting the birth of their first baby, unmarried mothers with an infant or a child under two years of age, and unmarried mothers with two or more illegitimate children. . . . We believe that in the enormous majority of cases a workhouse life debases such girls, who get used to their companions and surroundings ; and they leave and return to the workhouse as necessity compels them or as their own blunted feeling inclines them."

No attempt is made to classify the women who use these wards, and the result can only be disastrous for the more respectable women who find their way there.

This evil of promiscuity is but aggravated by the enforced idleness, which is one of the features in many of such wards, after the allotted task has been performed. Doubtless in some of our workhouses, especially those of industrial towns, this task of work is considerable, but it varies according to the Union, and in fact largely depends upon the master of the "house." Little definite instruction—instruction which might be of the greatest value afterwards—is given to these women either before or after their confinement. Can

we be surprised, therefore, that we find women here whose ideas on the value of work are only too well summarised in the saying of one workhouse inmate?

"So long as I can get 16 oz. of pie for my dinner and my two children kept for life, and they don't ask me to do any more than polish the stair banisters, I'm not going to work." [1]

The books of the Relieving Officer give the only record of the number of times these women have been "in the House" before, and no provision is made for them when they leave. The mothers are required to work by day and cannot take charge of their own children except by night. They usually suckle them at stated times.

"The nursery is in charge of a paid attendant, not a trained nurse, but a woman of some experience in the care of children, who is aided by 'grannies' or old pauper women who do the scrubbing and charing. These are not usually mothers of children in the nursery. The matron finds that the children of such mothers cry after them, and it delays the work, and she prefers to employ the mothers elsewhere." [2]

We cannot wonder, especially when we consider the half-starved condition of many of the mothers before entering, that in some workhouses the percentage of infants

[1] Majority Report, pt. iv. § 191.
[2] Minority Report, pt. i. ch. iii. (A) (ii).

who die within the first twelve months rises to thirty, thirty-five, and even forty for every hundred births. For the sake of these needlessly-perishing infants, for the sake of the women themselves, especially the young and honest woman worker, it is imperative that some change here in our present Poor Law system be made, and made speedily. The conclusion to which the Minority Report comes upon this question is—

"That whatever provision is made from public funds for maternity, whether in the way of supervision, or in domiciliary midwifery, or by means of Maternity Hospitals,[1] should be exclusively in the hands of the Local Health Authority."[2]

[1] But it must be remembered: (1) that it would be very expensive to build and maintain a sufficient number of separate Lying-in Hospitals. (2) Where such exist already they have proved, in the opinion of some, incentive, rather than deterrent, to immorality. (3) If they were to become at all general large numbers of people would use them who at present are quite able to do without them.

[2] The vastly increased *cost of maintenance* in any Poor Law institution is strikingly shown by the following table. This, considering the already heavy burden of the rates, is a serious factor in the situation :—

	Exclusive of Sites.	
	1885-9	1900-4
Cost per Bed in—	£ s.	£ s.
Workhouse	69 2	222 10
Infirmary	70 2	158 4
Casual Ward (London) ...	107 16	159 16
Cottage Home (London) ...	182 0	235 10
Cottage Home (Provincial)	105 17	121 2

—*Cf.* Majority Report, pt. ii. § 50.

But we must speak, before closing this chapter, of the accommodation which the casual ward affords the least fortunate of our women workers. One of the most serious aspects of our present Poor Law problem is the fact that the casual or vagrant poor have increased at an altogether disproportionate rate. In 1849 the casuals and vagrants numbered only 0.8 of the total number of paupers, whereas now they number no less than 1.8 of the total. It is reassuring to find that there is no increase, but considerable decrease, as far as vagrant children are concerned. But it is significant that these figures cannot be paralleled by those of the ordinary indoor and outdoor paupers, as the following table indicates : [1]

	"Ins."	"Outs."
1850 ...	6.5 per 1,000 ...	50.0
1908 ...	6.8 per 1,000 ...	15.3

The fact is, that whereas our indoor paupers have slightly increased during the last half century, and our outdoor paupers have decreased by more than two-thirds, the vagrant paupers have *almost doubled their numbers within the last decade*. This significant fact reveals to us the urgency of the whole question of vagrancy. We cannot here discuss this complicated and difficult subject in any detail,

[1] *Cf.* "Public Health and Social Conditions," issued by the Local Government Board, 1909.

for we are concerned only with the woman who, through unemployment or some other misfortune, seeks temporary refuge in the casual ward. The Departmental Committee on Vagrancy, which reported in 1906, made an exhaustive inquiry into the history, number and condition of the tramp population.[1] We cannot do better than quote the official words in reference to the casual ward for women.

"At present separate accommodation, under the charge of female officers, is provided for women in the casual wards. The rules as to their detention are the same as in the case of men, and their diet is also the same, though less in quantity. The task of work which is prescribed for them by the regulations is picking oakum (half the quantity given to the men) or domestic work, such as washing, scrubbing, cleaning, or needlework. Oakum picking as a task of work for females, however, has been discouraged for some time by the Local Government Board, but it is still in force in many unions. The number of female vagrants is comparatively small. Out of 9,768 vagrants relieved in casual wards in England and Wales on the night of January 1, 1905, only 887, or 9 per cent., were women."[2]

[1] If readers wish to read more on this subject they may also see what the present writers have written elsewhere on it, viz.: "An Essay on Vagrancy" in "Glimpses into the Abyss," by Mrs. Higgs, and "The Vagrant," ch. ii. of "The Unemployable and Unemployed," by Alden and Hayward.

[2] § 403. The *ages* of these women were as follows:

Between 16 and 35 years	132
Between 35 „ 65 „	660
65 and over	95

We may supplement these figures by those of January 1, 1908, when out of 10,436 vagrants received into the casual wards, 986 were found to be women and 178 children. When we remember that many of these women accompanied their husbands into these wards we may perhaps agree with the Minority Report that "the number of single women in the casual wards is infinitesimal." But this is by no means the end of the matter. Where do the considerable number of vagrant women find accommodation if not in the casual ward? There is a significant paragraph on this point in the Majority Report:

"The number of women and children to be found sleeping in the casual wards is small compared with the number seen upon the roads. The inference therefore is that the women and children sleep elsewhere, and this theory is confirmed by the counts which from time to time have been made of the vagrant population as a whole." [1]

Where this other accommodation is to be found, is, of course, a question capable of more than one answer. But there is an answer which one of the present writers has already given, and which, we are afraid, is a true one.

"The answer has been becoming ever more plain to me, but it has only been demonstrated by personal suffering. I could not have believed had I not seen.

[1] Pt. viii. § 246.

Our streets contain an army of prostitutes, and there has arisen over against the male problem a vast female problem with which our increasing Homes and Refuges and Shelters are unable to cope. *The correlative of the male wanderer is the female prostitute.* A woman must 'get her living,' and she does it 'on the streets.' The man who should support her honourably as a wife is himself a wanderer, afraid to incur family ties, but bound by no wholesome home influence to self-restraint."[1]

That the casual ward, by its oftentimes worse than prison treatment, by its vicious company and its lack of all reformative influence, contributes its share in this forcing of the woman downwards, there is little room to doubt. The verdict of the Departmental Committee as to the influence of these wards upon women is instructive.

"At present the treatment that female casuals receive is often unsatisfactory, and the complaints that Mrs. Higgs made of her experience in certain wards cannot be disregarded."[2]

Let us look at a typical casual ward where women are accommodated, taking, first, one in a large London workhouse recently visited by the writer. Here the casual "cells" have, within the last few years, been expensively rebuilt on lines approved by the Local Government Board. Vagrants must apply at the casual ward door not earlier than

[1] "Glimpses into the Abyss," p. 292.
[2] Vagrancy Committee, § 405.

4 p.m. in the winter and 6 p.m. in the summer. If there is room, as there generally is for women, the woman waits in a bare room furnished with a deal table and form—the "day" room—until supper time. Here she is searched and inquiries are made of her and recorded in a book. The matron of the ward, if she be as kindly a woman as in the case which we are describing, will find time to ask the few women who are seeking relief some questions. Where have they come from, what destination are they making for, and what are their prospects of work? &c. Here the opportunity of helping any genuine case of misfortune will lie, an opportunity occasionally seized and turned to lasting advantage. Supper, which will be served in a large, bare room from 6.30 to 7 p.m., will consist of a pint mug of gruel or porridge and half a loaf of bread. Before the women are shown to their "cells" a bath must be taken. After the bath, the woman is shown her "cell," which contains a small bed with straw mattress, bolster, and two blankets. She is locked into this "cell" by, at latest, 8 o'clock, and is called at six o'clock next morning. The woman cannot legally be discharged before 9 a.m. on the second day after admission. If she has been relieved in any casual ward of the same union—and all the wards in the metro-

polis are held to form one union—once during the month previous, she may be detained until the fourth day. This regulation would seem to press very hardly on the honest but homeless woman. If she has been unfortunate enough to seek shelter, in any part of a large area, once before in the month, she is to be punished by three days' compulsory detention, with labour! The food while she remains in the ward will be similar to what we have already described. The sort of work she will be required to do we have also described. But we may mention, in passing, that this work must be done *in her own clothes*. It is often dirty work, but no provision is made for her to wash her clothes when it is done, as she may do in the Workhouse.

This is the accommodation which the casual ward *at its best* has to offer the vagrant woman. It is *heartless* and consequently demoralising, and is distasteful to any woman with a spark of good feeling left in her. What it may be *at its worst* readers may judge for themselves by perusing the experiences of Mrs. Higgs, who has herself sampled the accommodation provided by several casual wards.[1] We cannot do better than to quote one of these experiences :

"We arrived, alone, a few minutes before six, at the workhouse lodge, which stood all by itself down

[1] *Cf.* "Glimpses into the Abyss," ch. ii.

a long lane which ended in iron gates. This lodge was very small, and was occupied by a man, the workhouse buildings being a little way off. There were a good many trees around, and it was a pretty spot, but lonely. The man was a male pauper, and no one else was in sight. We had to enter his hut to answer questions, which he recorded in a book, and we were then out of sight of the house. The nearest building was the tramp ward, the door of which stood open ; but there was no one in it, as we afterwards found. A single woman would be completely at the mercy of this man. . . . We went forward into an oblong room containing six bedsteads with wire mattresses and filthy straw pillows. A wooden table and bench and 'Regulations for Tramps' were the remaining articles of furniture. There were big, rather low windows on three sides ; the bottom panes were frosted, except one, which had been broken and mended with plain glass, and overlooked the yard where the male tramps worked. At last a motherly-looking woman entered by a door leading to a room beyond. She asked us if we were clean. We said we should like a bath, and were shown into a bath-room and allowed to bathe ourselves. Our clothes were taken from us, and we were given blue nightgowns. These looked fairly clean but had been worn before. . . . Perhaps the using of others' dirty nightgowns was the most revolting feature in our tramp. At neither workhouse were the garments handed to us *clean.* We found afterwards that by Government regulation clean bath water and a clean garment can be *demanded*, but this we did not know. They should be *supplied.* After the bath we were each given four blankets and told to make our beds and get into them. The art of bed-making on a wire mattress, without any other mattress to cover it, is a difficult one, even with four blankets. The regulation number is two. . . . In winter the ward is warmed by hot-water pipes, but the blankets are the same. A plank bed, such as

is given in some workhouses, would probably be warmer, though harder. Put to bed, like babies, at about half-past six, the kind woman in charge brought us our food. We were given a small lading-can three parts full of hot gruel and a thick crust of bread. The latter we were quite hungry enough to eat, but when we tasted the gruel it was *perfectly saltless*. A salt-box on the table, into which many fingers had been dipped, was brought us; the old woman said we were 'lucky to get that.' But we had no spoons; it was impossible to mix the salt properly into the ocean of nauseous food. . . . We were then left locked in alone, at eight o'clock, when no more tramps would be admitted. We had no means of assuaging the thirst which grew upon us as the night went on: for dry bread, even if washed down with thin gruel, is very provocative of thirst. I no longer wonder that tramps beg twopence for a drink and make for the nearest public-house."

Mrs. Higgs made the following recommendations to the Committee on Vagrancy:

"(i) I think it is altogether wrong to recognise a class of vagrant women at all. I think it is a great evil to recognise that a woman has the right to go about from place to place in that unattached kind of way. . . . It is a great mistake for our country to educate any women into vagrancy.

"(ii) I would do away with the casual ward for women.

"(iii) I should propose that single women should be received into the workhouse proper . . . It would also be better if married women were taken into the workhouse and their husbands were made to pay for them. I think they could go out with their husbands, if there was a reasonable presumption that the husband was a working man travelling about for work, after the ordinary detention."[1]

[1] Report, § 404.

The members of this Committee record that they "entirely approve of this suggestion," and point out that the casual ward is quite an unsuitable place for women, and especially for the children who sometimes accompany them. The women who were at all respectable would probably prefer the workhouse to the casual ward, and those who are habitual vagrants might be deterred by the stricter oversight that would be possible there. More useful work, too, might be found for wandering women in the workhouse, and there is more chance of their coming under reformative influences there than in the casual ward. They suggest that the relieving officer, or his assistant, should be able to admit such women, or even the master of the workhouse if the case were urgent; that discharge should be effected as it now is in the workhouse.[1] They also make the useful recommendation that a

[1] "Theoretically a destitute woman can at present enter the workhouse, but practically there are difficulties. She cannot claim entrance unless she has slept a night in the town and can give her address. A case in point is as follows: A woman visiting her husband, from whom she had been parted for years, was given in charge for drunkenness and got a week's imprisonment. She lost her work in a neighbouring town, and returning to her birthplace, being unable to find shelter, took refuge in the tramp ward. Next morning she applied for admission to the workhouse, being quite destitute. The relieving officer told her to apply to the Guardians *the following Wednesday*. It was then Friday. What was she to do meanwhile?"—"Glimpses into the Abyss," p. 304.

"way ticket" should be given the woman on tramp, to be presented at the various workhouses on the route by which she is travelling to her destination.

Surely this is a reform which even in the present state of our Poor Law system could be set on foot. It would leave the men vagrants in the casual wards, which should then, as the Committee recommend, be under the control of the police.[1] The whole phenomenon of vagrancy, especially female vagrancy, is only another proof of the fact that in the significant words of the Majority Report, "*something in our social organisation is seriously wrong*."[2]

[1] Report, §§ 405–8.
[2] Majority Report, pt. ii. § 153.

CHAPTER V

COMMON LODGING-HOUSE LAW

"I have systematically tried to turn fiction to the good account of showing the preventable wretchedness and misery in which the masses of the people dwell and of expressing again and again the conviction, founded upon observation, that *the reform of their habitations must precede all other reforms*, and that without it all other reforms must fail."—

CHARLES DICKENS.

WE have now described the housing accommodation available for all classes of women workers, with one important exception, viz., the common lodging-house. Before we see how women are likely to fare in this sort of house, let us briefly deal with the question of common lodging-houses in general, especially as to how they stand in relation to the law. Not much has been written on this subject, but we venture to think that it is one of the first importance for the physical and moral welfare of large numbers of our fellow-citizens. On the night of January 15, 1909, no less than

21,864 men, women and children secured accommodation in common lodging-houses in London alone. And to these should be added the 4,473 men who were to be found in the Rowton Houses in the metropolis on the night in question. This, then, is a question of considerable magnitude, and deserves more attention than it has hitherto received.

The evolution of the common lodging-house is an interesting, though perfectly natural one. The industrial revolution worked many and significant changes in the habits of our people. One of these was that we became, what hitherto we had as a community very little become, a thoroughly *migratory* people. The new railways opened up hitherto unrealised possibilities of travel; our roads vastly increased in mileage and were now far better made and maintained. To this greatly increased possibility of travel must be added the rapid growth of large industrial centres. In these centres the pressure upon the housing accommodation soon became very serious. Furthermore, a great army of casual labour began to be recruited throughout the land, and unemployment gradually became the permanent social evil that we know it to-day. Large numbers of low-grade labourers in search of work were faced with a real house famine in many of the towns and cities.

This created a demand which the common lodging-house helped to supply. Consequently, from the middle of the nineteenth century, almost every town has had its quota of common lodging-houses. What some of these places have been and still are remains an untold secret to the generality of those who live in these towns. But one or two of our cities early realised the urgency of this problem, for, as far back as 1853, Huddersfield built a municipal lodging-house, Glasgow following its example in 1879.

The common lodging-house thus became the cheaper substitute of the inn, which, up to the nineteenth century, had been able to accommodate those, both rich and poor, who might be travelling from place to place. It became "the poor man's hotel," and to it resorted not only the honest workman and workwoman in search of employment, but the motley host of vagrants, who, at least since Tudor times, had been "on the road," and had become a serious menace in some parts of the country. Many harsh laws had been passed, in the quaint words of one of these enactments, "against such as wake on the night and sleep on the day, and haunt customable taverns and alehouses and routs about, and no man wot from whence they come ne whither they go." These measures had not resulted in the absolute suppression

of vagrancy, but the Elizabethan Poor Law succeeded in greatly diminishing it. The unsettled period, however, due to the beginning of the industrial revolution and the advent of machinery again threw a host of "broken men" upon the roads. Since the Poor Law of 1834 the evil has been steadily increasing rather than diminishing. To the common lodging-house, then, comes the vagrant whenever he has a copper or two to save him from the casual ward, and his coming has made it an altogether undesirable place for the honest man, not to speak of the respectable woman. The writer whom we have once before quoted remarks :—

"These places have proved to be very largely the resort of the idle, the dissolute, and the criminal, though, no doubt, a sprinkling of the honest poor may be found among them, but they are by no means desirable homes, if that word can rightly be used in this connection, for the latter class. Under present conditions, such houses have a definite place in the social economy of towns and cities, inasmuch as they provide shelter for a certain proportion of the poor—the *residuum*." [1]

The law has stepped in and taken over the control and oversight of these places, and it has surely done so rightly. For to them, as we have seen, come the lowest and most

[1] "The Housing Problem in England," E. R. Dewsnup M.A., p. 92.

degraded, and these, without proper supervision, would become a real danger to the community. It is right that the law should have the control there, in the interests of the inmates themselves. The classes which use these houses are just those which are least able to protect themselves; they are, generally, the poorest of the poor, and would have little or no redress against those who supply the accommodation. Moreover, the fact that they use such accommodation only temporarily, constantly moving on from one common lodging-house to another, renders them still more helpless against the lodging-house proprietor. The law asserts that at least a minimum of decent and sanitary accommodation shall be supplied by such proprietors. But it has not been able to guarantee that such accommodation shall be either sufficient or *safe* for such women as are compelled to resort to it.

What, then, are the prescribed conditions of the law which has claimed the right of control and supervision over the common lodging-house? Outside the Metropolitan Police District the law is the Public Health Act of 1875 (secs. 76-90) and Part V. of the Public Health Acts Amendment Act of 1907. But this latter must be adopted by the local authority on the permission of the Local Government Board. The local

authority may also supplement these provisions by making local by-laws. In the County of London the law is Part IX. of the London County Council General Powers Act (1902), and, where still applicable, the Common Lodging-houses Acts of 1851 and 1853. These last-named Acts (often called "Shaftesbury's Acts" because they were framed by the great philanthropist) have not, however, exactly the same force in the *City* of London, nor in the Metropolitan Police District *outside* the County of London. Various memoranda and model by-laws have been issued by the Local Government Board to interpret these Acts.

Before setting forth some of the leading provisions of these measures we must ask ourselves more precisely what a common lodging-house is. We find that there are three classes of lodging-house: (*a*) "furnished rooms," (*b*) *unregistered* lodging-houses, often called "weekly" or "seamen's" lodging-houses, and (*c*) *registered* or "common" lodging-houses.

(*a*) "*Furnished Rooms*."—These are apartments, furnished by the owner or lessee of a house, and sublet, monthly, weekly, or even nightly, to (generally) the poorest and (oftentimes) the lowest class of persons. Such furnished rooms may be obtained for about one shilling per night or less, even six-

pence a night being not uncommon in some large towns; no questions are asked the tenants, provided the rent be punctually pre-paid. This is oftentimes extortionate, considering the quantity and conditions of the so-called "furniture." These rooms do not come under common lodging-house law, and we may therefore dismiss them. But it must be said that the "furnished rooms" form a very serious problem from the point of view of the public health because of frequent and serious overcrowding; and still more from the point of view of public morality, for they are oftentimes put to the worst of uses. Little seems to be done, under the present law, to punish offenders in this direction, and it is quite time that special attention were given to the matter.

(*b*) *Unregistered* lodging-houses are lodgings which are let for a period of a week or of more than a week. Like "furnished rooms," these do not come under common lodging-house law, and the only control which the local authority has over them is that of ordinary sanitary inspection. It seems desirable that considerably more power should be given to the local authorities to deal with these houses, for undoubtedly abuses exist in connection with them. They often take lodgers for less than a week, and thus should be under the same control as common

lodging-houses ; but there exists no right of entry as there is to these latter, and it is therefore difficult to detect breaches of the law. Recently in Cardiff, when there were some unpleasant revelations as to the condition of seamen's boarding-houses in that city, it was discovered that thirty-three houses used as common lodging-houses were yet unregistered. It was stated that "the owners were about to apply for licences"! There is probably a good deal more of this sort of evasion of the law than would be acknowledged by the officials of our sanitary bodies. As the case of Cardiff has shown, such evasions are sure to indicate a very undesirable state of affairs in a town. Any cheap lodging-houses, not directly under the control of the local authority, are a source of real danger to the community, especially to the poor and, oftentimes, defenceless woman worker. Here, too, stricter methods seem to be needed, in many of our large towns, in dealing with this question.

(*c*) *Registered or "Common" Lodging-houses.*—Readers will perhaps be surprised to learn that there is considerable doubt as to what the exact legal definition of a common lodging-house is. In section 89 of the Public Health Act, 1875, it is stated that "the expression 'common lodging-house' includes, in any case in which only part of a house is

used as a common lodging-house, the part so used of such a house." But no definition is given of the term in this Act. The "Encyclopædia of the Laws of England" [1] has the following remarks on this point:

"The nearest statutory definition is that of the Towns Improvement Clauses Act, 1847, which defines a public lodging-house as one in which persons are harboured or lodged for a single night, or for less than a week at a time, or any part of which is let for less than a week."

But, as the author of this article points out, this definition would include all inns, hostels, and hotels; and he tells us that, for registration purposes, the following is probably as correct a definition as can be given:

"A house, or part of a house, where persons of the poorer classes are received for gain, and in which they use one or more rooms in common with the rest of the inmates, who are not members of one family, whether for eating or sleeping."

In a memorandum, which includes the model by-laws for common lodging-houses, the Local Government Board raises this question of the lack of statutory definition, and refers the local authorities to the opinion of the law officers of the Crown. This opinion was

[1] Edited by A. W. Renton and M. A. Roberts, vol. iii., article, "Common Lodging-houses."

set forth in a circular of the General Board of Health (October, 1853), and we will quote it in full :

"It may be difficult to give a precise definition of the term 'common lodging-house,' but looking to the preamble and general provisions of the Act, it appears to us to have reference to that class of lodging-houses in which persons of the poorer class are received for short periods, and though strangers to one another are allowed to inhabit one common room. We are of opinion that it does not include hotels, inns, public-houses or lodgings let to the upper and middle classes; and that the period of letting is unimportant in determining whether a lodging-house comes under the Act now in question."

The Act referred to is the Common Lodging-houses Act of 1853, which we have already noticed. The last point raised in this opinion is an important one, viz., the period of letting. Although there is no statutory definition of lodgings *let for less than a week*, as a matter of practice this period of letting has been recognised as one of the distinctive marks of a "common" as against other lodging-houses. Another point should also be mentioned. If there be no common room, the lodging-house is not to be considered a *common* lodging-house, but it may come under the term "seamen's" lodging-house, in which case it must be licensed in accordance with the provisions of the Merchant Shipping Act, 1894. The autho-

rity for licensing these "seamen's" lodging-houses is, in London, the London County Council, and, elsewhere, the local sanitary authority, over which either the County Council or the Local Government Board, as the case may be, has power to enforce the regulations of the Act.

We may take it, then, that, for all practical purposes, a common lodging-house is a low-class lodging-house which must be licensed by the local sanitary authority and which is open to all comers, even though they be dirty and likely to be diseased. There must be a common room where such persons may take food; also sleeping-rooms, which may be used in common so long as the two sexes are kept apart. There are, it may be said in passing, various enactments which prohibit the owners of such places from harbouring felons, prostitutes, thieves, &c.

Let us now see, more particularly, what the powers of the sanitary authority are as regards the licensing and the inspection of these houses. Section 80 of the Public Health Act, 1875, reads:

"Every local authority shall, from time to time, make by-laws:

1. For fixing and, from time to time, varying the number of lodgers who may be received into a common lodging-house, and for the separation of the sexes therein; and

2. For promoting cleanliness and ventilation in such houses; and

3. For the giving of notices and the taking precautions in the case of any infectious disease; and

4. Generally, for the well-ordering of such houses."

We will take each of these points in order and see what is usually insisted upon by the local authority. But we must remember that the by-laws of each authority will somewhat differ according to the local conditions prevailing and, it must be added, according to the amount of zeal which the authority shows in matters of public health and morals.

1. The number of lodgers who may be received into a common lodging-house, together with the proper separation of the men from the women, are matters of the utmost importance. We make no apology therefore for entering into some detail on both these points. On a licence being granted to a common lodging-house the following *Schedule* is sent to the keeper of the house:

Borough [or Urban (or Rural) District] of .....

Common lodging-house situated at .....

Name of keeper .....

The maximum number of lodgers authorised to be received at one time into this house is .....

The maximum number of lodgers authorised to be received at any one time into each of the several rooms in this house is the number specified in respect of such room in the appropriate column of the following table :—

	Description or Number of Room.	Dimensions or Cubical Contents of Room.	Maximum Number of Lodgers.
Ground Storey			
First Storey			
Second Storey			
Topmost Storey			

For the purposes of this notice every two children under the age of *ten years*[1] may be counted as one lodger.

The amount of air-space for each adult varies according to the local authority which issues the schedule. A general allowance is 400 cubic feet for each lodger over ten years of age and 200 cubic feet for each child

[1] The London County Council has lowered this age limit to *six years*. *Cf.* By-law 7.

under that age in a room *exclusively used for sleeping purposes*. But these figures should be raised to 500 cubic feet and 300 cubic feet respectively if the sleeping-room is used for other purposes. The number of lodgers to be received may be varied from time to time at the absolute discretion of the local authority. This is an important point, considering the quickly-changing conditions of our growing centres of population. It is quite possible that regulations which were suitable enough ten or twenty years ago would be very unsuitable under present-day conditions. The sanitary authority, therefore, is not to be bound by its previous regulations.

The keeper of the lodging-house is compelled to exhibit in each room a printed form like the following, so that lodgers may be fully acquainted with the regulations :

COMMON LODGING-HOUSE.

Licence No. .....

Street or Place .....

No. of Room .....

Number of Lodgers authorised to be received in this Room .....

The rules for the separation of the sexes are set forth as follows in the Model By-

laws of the Local Government Board. The sleeping apartments for men and women are to be kept absolutely distinct, save for rooms where married couples may be received. No male child above the age of ten years may occupy a room used by women lodgers. Where two or more married couples occupy the same sleeping-room it shall

"be so furnished or fitted that every bed, when in use and occupation, shall be effectively screened from the view of any occupant of any other bed, by means of a partition of wood or other solid material[1] —so as to extend upwards throughout the whole length and breadth of such bed to a sufficient height above such bed, and downwards to a distance of not more than *six inches* above the level of the floor."

These regulations seem to be plain enough, and yet, as is well known, the separation of the men and women lodgers is by no means absolute in many lower-class lodging-houses. The writer has seen doors which are locked, it is true, when any inspection of the house takes place, but which form far from impassable barriers between the men's and women's sleeping quarters at other times. A

[1] The London County Council By-law (11) adds here: "Each part thus partitioned off to contain a bed shall have on one of its sides *the whole or part of a window opening directly into the external air*, except where in an already licensed house, this cannot reasonably be done." In the latter case this regulation is not binding until five years from the confirmation of the by-laws.

narrow passage with a thin partition and an easily-opened door is not effectual separation, and it needs little conjecture as to what goes on when such houses are situated in the lowest parts of the city or town. Only the most rigid insistence on regulations (especially in the case of old and badly-planned common lodging-houses), and the most careful inspection will avail to lessen a very real evil in this direction.

2. As regards the cleansing and ventilating of common lodging-houses the Model By-laws, from which we have already quoted, give "rules which should guide the inspecting officer in his examination of the premises." He is told that "the house (i.) should possess the conditions of wholesomeness needed for dwelling-houses in general; and (ii.) it should further have arrangements fitting it for its special purpose of receiving a given number of lodgers." [1] Under this latter head it is recommended that:

(*a*) "the closets or privies and the refuse receptacles of the house should be in proper situation. For every twenty registered lodgers a separate closet or privy should be required." (*b*) "The house should have a water supply of good quality—of not less than ten gallons a day where there are water-closets, or five gallons a day where there are dry

[1] In Appendix III. will be found the ideal standard for such a house as set up by the Local Government Board.

closets. The washing accommodation should, wherever practicable, be in a special place and not be in the bedrooms." (*c*) "Inside walls should not be papered."

Surely this last regulation is honoured as much in its breach as in its observance! Yet all who know common lodging-houses will recognise the importance of it for the health and comfort of the inmates.

Besides these suggestions the by-laws include regulations for the proper ventilation of the sleeping-rooms and passages. "Every keeper of a common lodging-house shall . . . cause every window to be kept fully open for *one hour* at least in the forenoon, and for *one hour* at least in the afternoon of every day," except when weather or sickness makes this undesirable. The beds have to be stripped and aired for at least one hour each day. No bed may be occupied by more than one person "of the male sex above the age of ten years." By-law 22 forbids to any lodger the use of a bed "at any time within the period of eight hours after such bed shall have been vacated by the last preceding occupant thereof." It would be interesting to know how often this regulation is broken! As also the next by-law, which prescribes that every bedroom shall be furnished "with such a supply of bedclothes and of necessary utensils as may be sufficient for the require-

ments of the number of lodgers received into such room."

3. We need say only a word as to "the taking precautions in the case of any infectious disease." The lodging-house keeper is obliged to "adopt all such precautions as may be necessary to prevent the spread of such infectious disease." In the London County Council by-laws this includes the giving of "immediate notice in writing to the medical officer of health of the county" (By-law 27). The room in which the patient is, or has been, lying may be ordered to be disinfected; in which case the keeper "shall cease to receive any lodger in such room or rooms or shall receive therein such number of lodgers, being less than the maximum number, as the exigencies of the case may require." He has also to "forthwith take all such steps as may be requisite on his part to secure the safe and prompt removal" of a sick lodger to the hospital, &c., if such be ordered by the sanitary authority.

4. Under the last head, viz., the making of by-laws "generally, for the well ordering of such houses," we should like to throw out one or two suggestions for reform. We need perhaps say little as to *precautions against fire* in common lodging-houses, although this is, of course, an important point. The London County Council has a special by-law on this

subject (No. 26), and this enforces the use of "fire-extinguishing appliances which shall be reasonably sufficient," and prohibits the use of any lighted lamp *or candle* "unless such candle is properly protected or such lamp is so constructed, protected, and secured as not to involve risk of fire to the house or its contents." It is necessary that such regulations should be made and *rigidly enforced* by every local authority, as there is real risk of life to the inmates, especially in old and ill-built common lodging-houses. It is clear that the keepers of most of such houses cannot afford to build or maintain houses structurally good, but that is all the more reason why the strictest supervision should be kept over them, in the interest of the lodgers and the public alike.

Here we should like to say a word as to those who are engaged by lodging-house keepers as servants, cooks, caretakers, &c. It is evident that none of the by-laws we have been quoting apply to these, except they be lodgers as well as inmates of the lodging-houses. It is to be feared that the conditions under which some of these live are not what they should be. We have heard of cases, for example, where young girls, engaged as servants, had their sleeping quarters in underground rooms which would not have been licensed for the accommoda-

tion of lodgers.[1] Women and girls engaged, too, in other capacities in such houses often fare very badly. What the relation of these women is, sometimes, to the keeper of the lodging-house we know only too well, and a number of sad instances were brought to light during the recent revelations at Cardiff. But whatever the position of such dependants may be, it appears to the writer that a stricter oversight of the way in which they are housed is necessary and ought to be carried out by the local authorities, especially by those of our large seaport towns.

This brings us to another important point, viz., the sort of premises suitable for registration as common lodging-houses. It is surely high time that all places which are licensed for the sale and consumption of intoxicating liquors should be held unsuitable for licensing as a common lodging-house. We need not argue this point, for it will be apparent to all that, for many reasons, such a step is a necessary one in the interests of the men lodgers. And if this is true of the men lodgers, it is ten times more true of the women lodgers. Is it right to leave the wandering and almost destitute woman to find a night's lodging on licensed premises? And yet there is one town where, we know,

[1] Model By-law 20 prohibits the use as a sleeping apartment of any room appointed as a kitchen or scullery.

such is *the only form of common lodging-house to be found*. We quote the following from the Report (1908) of the Medical Officer of Health for Bedford :

"There are five 'common lodging-houses' in Bedford Borough. These five are situated within a length of 100 yds.: 'Royal Oak,' 'The Cock,' 'White Hart,' 'Live and Let Live' and 'The Boot.' The washing arrangements are primitive even for the class who use them. In each case the premises (except the 'Live and Let Live,' which has been reconstructed within the last seven years) consist of old houses converted into common lodging-houses, and are ill-adapted for the purpose. All five of these common lodging-houses are on licensed premises. This is a most objectionable state of things. That opportunities for illicit drinking on the part of the inmates exist cannot be denied."

This, too, is a question which much needs looking into.

Another point we would refer to is the fact that it is far too difficult to take away a licence granted to a common lodging-house. When once a house has been registered by the local authority the licence can only be taken away on a *third* distinct breach of the by-laws. However old and generally unsuitable the premises may be, if a licence has once been granted the keeper may continue to take in lodgers. We suggest that power should be given to the local authority to treat the renewal of the

licence as *annual*, and that strict inquiry should be made in order to ensure that desirable conditions obtain, before this licence is renewed year by year. It was discovered in Cardiff that many of the keepers of the common lodging-houses were living with (if not by) women to whom they were certainly not married, and very bad places such lodging-houses were found to be. It has been decided by the Health and Sanitary Committee in that city that in the future no licence for a common lodging-house will be granted to such men or women. In cities like Cardiff—in fact, in all our towns—there is needed a thorough "speeding up" of lodging-house regulations. Licences were, years ago, granted under conditions which would not be tolerated to-day. These licences ought to be carefully revised, and registration refused in all cases where plainly undesirable conditions obtain. What is wanted is a universal system of yearly registration of *all lodging-houses where ninepence, or less, per person is charged for the night*. This price limit would rule out the more respectable "lodgings," and would include "furnished rooms" and the low-class weekly lodgings which so much need supervision.

In conclusion, we would say that, in our opinion, many sanitary inspectors have heavier

duties than they can possibly perform with efficiency. The proper inspection and supervision of the common lodging-houses alone of any of our large cities form a serious part of the work of the sanitary inspectors. But they have multifarious duties to perform besides these. In Cardiff it was found that an inspector who had been in charge sixteen years had the oversight of no less than 177 common lodging-houses, and, as he himself pleaded at the public inquiry, "his duties were such that he had been out three or four nights a week; he had no time off; in fact, he had two men's work to attend to." In the best interests of the public such unavoidable neglect of duty ought to be immediately made impossible. The police, who, be it remembered, have legal access to common-lodging-houses [1] must co-operate with the sanitary authority, and a new and stricter regime should be initiated in the management of these houses.

[1] It might be desirable to place *low-class* common lodging-houses under the police authorities, with due access by the sanitary authorities, to see that sanitary regulations are carried out. The police as a rule know the inmates, many of whom are often "wanted," better than the sanitary authorities; they are frequently called in to settle disputes, and have better opportunities for judging the conduct of the house and the qualifications of the owner or his "deputy" for what is really a responsible and difficult post. The low character of the "deputies" has much to do with misconduct and needs safe-guarding quite as much as that of publicans, in the public interest.

CHAPTER VI

THE COMMON LODGING-HOUSE FOR WOMEN

"Our daughters with base-born babies
Have wandered away in their shame;
If your misses had slept, squire, where they did,
Your misses might do the same."—KINGSLEY.

THE sole refuge, in most towns, of the migratory worker is the common lodging-house, and this, with its accompanying weekly lodging-houses and complement of "furnished rooms," constitutes the real focus of the evils of our housing problem. If you study any considerable town of modern growth, you will be struck by the repetition in each of a certain structure, showing that the town is an *organism*, that has developed certain *organs* adapted to its life. In the "heart of the city" will be the market and shops, arrangements to feed it. It has its "main arteries" and its "nervous system" of telegraph and telephone. But one feature

you will find in every large town. In some slum district, usually fairly central, you will find houses rather larger than the ordinary ones, once inhabited by well-to-do people, now converted into common lodging-houses. These lodging-houses usually congregate together and form "a quarter"; in some cases alleys and byways and courts are connected with them, forming a network in which the police are usually much required but not in request.

To every town there must necessarily come poor strangers. If these can be usefully absorbed into the town life, well and good. There are certain waves of migration, such as the migration from town to country in summer, and *vice versâ*, that must have their echo in poor migration as well as rich. There are certain occupations, such as that of the navvy and the fruit-picker, that must be migratory. Also the breaking-up of homes, entire or partial, is always occurring. Where are stranded individuals to find temporary accommodation? The tramp ward, apart from the common lodging-house, is but a poor indication of the number of floating units in our social system. It is hard to realise the condition of homelessness in which many of our fellow-beings live. "He had not where to lay his head" is true of thousands. So far from civilisation decreasing this class, it

appears to be a product of it, as dust is of the highway. A foothold on life becomes increasingly precarious as the standard of living rises. That pressure exists in the direction of the breaking up of the family into isolated units, due partly to the high price and partly to the insufficient supply of housing accommodation in all our large towns, cannot be denied. Only a small portion of the individuals practically homeless find their way into the casual ward. Thus on January 15, 1909, in London only 1,188 took refuge in casual wards and 2,088 were homeless (including 1,399 men in shelters without beds), but a great army of 21,864 men, women, and children found refuge in the common lodging-house, without including 4,473 men in Rowton Houses. This will give some idea of the magnitude of the common lodging-house problem.

Perhaps its difficulty may be elucidated by the lurid light thrown on the condition of things in Cardiff by recent revelations which have found their way into the press. Through the energy of Councillor Nicholl the state of affairs in the seamen's boarding-houses of Cardiff was brought to light.[1]

In many towns the police department, which has the greatest knowledge of the inmates, and which has legal access to them, has no

[1] See Chapter V., pp. 91, 105, 106.

control whatever over their management. It may even happen (it happened at Cardiff) that people may be authorised by the Health Committee to conduct registered houses to whom the police department objects. At Cardiff, after public interest was stirred, seven applicants out of fourteen (already in charge of lodging-houses) were rejected for the following reasons: One had only been six months in the country and had a young girl living with him. One was unmarried and the house had been transferred from his brother, who had committed an offence against the laws and was still living in the house with his wife. One was living with a woman not his wife. One had a drunken wife. Another had been convicted of illicit sale of beer. The sixth had a woman in his house not married to him. The seventh was the wife of a man who had stolen money from a boarder and disappeared.

It will be seen, therefore, how difficult and how important is the supervision of this portion of the city life. If care has to be exercised in the public licensing annually of public-houses, surely at least as much care should be exercised with regard to lodging-houses. What is the state of things that may grow up if there is lax supervision? And how does it affect women? A few examples may illustrate what may happen.

In one house it was found that "the bedroom of the servant-girl communicates by means of a window with a room in which six sailors are permitted to sleep." In another a young English girl, barely twenty-one, was "supposed to be" "the wife of the boss." In another a girl of twenty-two had two black babies. The man who kept the house where she lived was a coloured seaman, who thrashed her so unmercifully that the police had to stand between her and murder. Yet this man was passed as fit and proper to conduct a boarding-house! He wanted to get rid of her. In another "one English girl and twenty-four Chinamen were found; the proprietor said he was not married." In a Spanish house there were nine beds in a room 18 feet by 12 feet. "Two English girls were apparently the only persons in charge; one was twenty-two and the other about thirty. These were seemingly the licensed managers of a common lodging-house." In another "the Chinese proprietor had an English wife, and the servant-girl, an English girl of twenty-one, had been victimised by a Greek boarding-master and thrown on the streets. The Chinese boarding-master took her in. There were nineteen boarders."

These are bare facts; what horrors do they conceal?

The insanitary state of some of the lodging-

houses visited was remedied in a surprising manner by the unwonted inspection. Such scrubbing, cleansing, and whitewashing took place that in twenty-four hours a complete revolution was effected. In a house licensed to lodge twenty-four, and not exactly fit to accommodate twelve, seventy-eight men were found to have slept. In this house there were twelve breaches of the by-laws. In several houses not a washing utensil was to be seen. There was no record of any member of the Health Committee having visited for years.

A lady writing on the subject truly calls these boarding-houses "the alley of anguish." Young girls from the country, she asserts, are drawn in to "service" in such lodging-houses. They are simply trapped into an evil life. Other places exist which trap girls; an illustration may be given:

"A girl of fourteen in response to an advertisement went to a shop. She was courteously received by the owner. Surprised at the absence of tobacco, &c., she asked what her duties would be; she was told she must attend to the shop and be pleasant, and that her sleeping-room was behind some curtains where he also lived and slept. The girl took her departure, but the 'tobacconist' soon found a dupe."

It is hardly surprising that such offences against morality should occur when "The Watch Committee is averse to enforcing its

powers for fear of hurting the susceptibilities of the Health Committee ! "

" Servants are advertised for and engaged. Many of the girls come from outlying districts, some orphans and friendless. Under the impression that they have entered desirable domestic service, they are soon disillusioned. Sometimes they rebel against the life they are expected to lead, and are then cast on the streets, often with pitiable results. Sometimes they pass as the 'wives' of the 'bosses.' The Health Committee and Watch Committee should unite in seeing that only men with good characters are granted licences, and that under no circumstances whatever shall an unmarried man be in charge of a boarding-house."

We have not only to think, in considering the effect of ill-managed common lodging-houses, of their internal conditions, but of their effect on the surrounding population. They exert suction for evil on the young girl and on the young boy.[1] They form plague spots. Their mortality is also double that of the ordinary population.

Here, therefore, is focussed all that the sanitarian, and the humanitarian, and the social reformer have to fight, and the white light of social science, the utmost skill of administrative ability, and the heat of philanthropic energy should be brought to bear on the problems here concentrated. If we

[1] Ch. xi., " Beggars," W. H. Davies.

can deal with this social sore we can solve social problems. Here are concentrated those who prey on society.

Now this fact has a peculiar bearing on women. It has been shown in the previous chapters that there are now multitudes of women industrially self-supporting. In fact, self-support is now the normal position of every working-class girl above fourteen as well as the boy. But this self-support often involves separation from the home. Large towns serve as suction centres on rural population, and even within the town—partly because the home is so cramped that the children outgrow it, partly because of the arrangement of industries, and the necessary massing of workers within reach—numbers of individual women are drawn out of homes and become "lodgers." At first, perhaps, respectable lodgers, but a very slight turn of fortune may precipitate them into the abyss. It is indeed marvellous, the charity of the poor to the poor, and the way in which a poor working woman will help a girl without a penny, often only relinquishing her under pressure from her husband. But always there are some dropping out. Always close to the starved, homeless woman is "the life."

The life of "the street" is the feminine side of "the unemployed problem." Make up

your mind whenever the unemployed problem grows acute that the feminine side of it is the pushing of so many more unprotected women over the edge into vice. This fact accounts for the comparative smallness of the number of women in common lodging-houses. On January 15, 1909, in London there were but 1,483 women and 161 children in common lodging-houses as against 20,059 men, and in casual wards only 184 women and 3 children against 1,001 men (162 women and 23 children being homeless on the streets as against 1,903 men). Is this because fewer women become destitute than men? It is to be feared that this cannot be the explanation. If we consider not only the danger of the unprotected girl, but the perilous condition of the girl with her first baby, or of the widow left to struggle, or of the separated wife, we see what a suction must exist into the alley of vice. This suction it is the part of a self-respecting nation, that values its health if not its morality, to remove. We do not think of herding together the sexes in the tramp ward ; even husband and wife are separated ; yet throughout the country conditions are allowed in common lodging-houses that are a shame and disgrace to civilisation. Indeed, in the common lodging-house the work of pauperisation goes forward, the heritage of shame being

passed on to a new generation. Here is an illustration : [1]

"It is no uncommon event for a man and woman to strike up an acquaintance in a workhouse which ultimately results in increased burdens to the ratepayer. Messages are conveyed . . . the couple leaving the workhouse together. They tramp the countryside as man and wife during the summer months. At the approach of winter the man returns, with a sigh of relief, to his old bachelor quarters in the workhouse, where the gleeful account of his exploits is listened to with open-mouthed admiration by the youthful male pauper, and with envy by the hoary sinner.

"In this manner a feeble-minded woman and a physically enfeebled man—both chronic paupers and chargeable to the Union—begat five children, all of whom were born in the workhouse, and were reared at the expense of the ratepayers."

Even where in the common lodging-house the separation of the sexes at night is insisted on, all kinds of wrong conditions are allowed, such as lavatory arrangements in common, common sitting-rooms and kitchens, and very imperfect oversight. This is the writer's experience :

"In one lodging-house I slept in we never saw manager or 'deputy' save that we paid our money to a young girl through a glass window, and she showed us our room. We shared a kitchen with men, and every drop of washing water had to be

[1] *Social Service*, January, 1910, quoting report of Stepney Guardians.

fetched from the part of the building for *men only*. This was in a 'model' lodging-house!

"Provision for 'married couples' is in lodging-house parlance simply provision for 'doubles.' No supervision is exercised, and the arrangement plays into the hands of vice. A single woman cannot always obtain a bed. I have been to the door of a lodging-house to ask for a bed. All the beds for single women were full, but a man shouted out that I could 'come and share his bed.' It is well-known that a woman is often told that she cannot come in unless she 'brings her man.' It is to the lodging-house keeper's interest to let the bed double. The pressure in the direction of vice can be better imagined than described."

Here is the testimony of a marine engineer:

"I have slept in a bed-room containing four double beds, and I can, without fear of contradiction, state that seven men and four girls occupied these beds, the girls' ages ranging from 15 to 17½ years. Ask the prostitutes where they became what they are, and 90 per cent. would answer, 'I was servant in a boarding-house and was compelled to sleep with seafaring men.'"

Yet these things take place in *registered* common lodging-houses, in houses nominally under public control. If the law is not strong enough, by all means let us make it stronger; if weekly lodging-houses evade registration, let us get them also under the law; if inspection is necessary, let us pay inspectors, or authorise the police to have proper control. It is idle to make occasional raids on brothels

when such places as these are allowed under the very eye of the law.

Yet there is a still lower depth, growing as a matter of course out of such a social cancer as this. This condition of things plays into the hands of those who exploit women for their own ends. Whence comes the flaunted vice of our streets? Those intimately acquainted with the white slave traffic can bear witness to the fact that it does not proceed from the struggle of women for self-support, so much as from the struggle of men to make women support them. Here is an example :

"A young woman in a broken straw hat, an old shiny plush jacket, and a frayed skirt rushes out of a house. Her language strikes a note of violence even in this street. It is directed at a young man on the doorstep—'Her husband,' the neighbours say with a smile and a wink. He is a thirsty soul—he will probably work no more. She tells him she will keep him no longer, but the police shall know how he lives. It is an idle threat."

These poor degraded women, preyed on by men vultures, will not turn King's evidence. Do you wonder? If they apply for a summons, where are they to live while the summons is running its course? The same applies to the wife with a brutal husband. Is she to continue living before the court-day with the very man who illtreated her? If not, then

where? Bullies are bullies in more than name. A lady who self-denyingly went into London lodging-houses to test conditions saw a poor girl come in with a throat cut and bleeding. Her life had been attempted. The girls suffer horribly in the power of these men. Here indeed is an *inferno*. It may be said that there are at any rate homes and refuges in which shelter can be found. But in considering this two points must be remembered. First, though every year numbers of *victims* of the "alley of shame" are, at a great expenditure of charitable funds, rescued, surely it is the *entrance* to this alley we should carefully guard. Second, once a woman has fallen so low, there is a bar to her return, real though impalpable. Setting aside the physical craving created, which may exercise as strong a compulsion as the craving for drink, only in the companionship of those who "live the life" can she remain *self-respecting*. This may seem a strange saying, yet it is a fact. Society frowns on her, honest women draw away their skirts; but among those frankly and openly her equals, living as she does, when once self-respect is gone, she finds what a woman craves—companionship, friendship, and "life." Hence such women tend to congregate or to pair, becoming as frankly predatory as Beggars. If they do not do this, they pass into the possession of a man, or a

series of men, who exploit them for their own ends.

Consequently there is special need to supply to the girl or woman the companionship she needs under good conditions, to prevent her falling into the *camaraderie* of vice. We shall see later how hard it is for her to obtain for herself right conditions.

CHAPTER VII

THE URGENCY OF THE NEED FOR REFORM

"Capacity for the nobler feelings is in most natures a very tender plant, easily killed, not only by hostile influences, but by mere want of sustenance."—J. S. MILL.

IT will be seen that the law has undertaken, in however imperfect a way, the oversight of the common lodging-house. This fact alters the whole situation. It implies responsibility that did not exist before, for the arrangements for sanitation and for oversight of conditions.

Such responsibility we have seen to be eminently desirable, because :

1. To the lodging-houses drift down just those classes that are the greatest danger to the community.

2. Because these are the individuals least able to protect themselves from wrong.

3. Because the individual making only

temporary use of accommodation has less power to secure satisfactory conditions than the permanent lodger.

4. Because the extreme of poverty in which most are found forces them to accept whatever is provided.

W. H. Davies, who in "Beggars" throws much light on common lodging-house conditions, shows [1] that even the power to give a penny tip to the "deputy" gives advantages over an ordinary lodger. But if these conditions press hardly on men, they press more hardly still on women. In the chapter on "Lady Tramps," Davies shows that the very demands they make on the lodging-house for extra comfort and cleanliness make them undesirable lodgers from the lodging-house keeper's point of view, and that for these and other reasons accommodation for them is decreasing.[2]

In London there existed in 1904 authorised accommodation for

2,281 women and 447 "couples" ... ... = 2,728 women

In 1909 for

2,365 women and only 245 "couples" ... ... = 2,610 women

Deficit ... 118

[1] P. 195. [2] P. 248.

Meanwhile the accommodation for men had increased by 258, and in addition the Rowton House accommodation had grown to a capacity of 4,473; while the casual ward accommodation for women had only increased by 34.

It is true that the accommodation for women in both casual wards and lodging-houses was not full, but this is no accurate measure of the need, for the accommodation being distributed all over London, there might be deficiency in one place and surplus at another. There always should be accommodation to meet the *maximum* need. There were 5,917 *men's* beds in common lodging-houses vacant on the night in question, rather more than one-sixth of the accommodation, and 635 beds in Rowton houses. The number of *free* beds in charitable institutions licensed as lodging-houses is given on the night in question as 384 for men, and 4 vacant; 34 for women, and 47 vacant; 23 for children, none vacant; and also 822 for men for labour, and 33 vacant. The report states that such accommodation is "always fully used," and that "it may safely be assumed that no great differences in the number of persons thus accommodated would be found if the figures for each of the years could be obtained." The extremely small number of free beds for women will be noted. The fact of there being 47 empty may be due to local distribution or

to the fact that such as there are are often hedged round by such restrictions as make them not available for those in greatest need. Thus Dr. Barnardo's two homes are said to be "for women with children, and girls under twenty." In shelters, not licensed as lodging-houses, there were 188 men and 155 women, and in Church Army Labour Homes 245 men and 206 women. So that the number of the sexes making use of this accommodation was nearly *equal*. But as a rule these places only shelter for a short time. On the night in question 170 homeless women were found with 23 children. Of the 1,903 homeless *men*, 1,184 received tickets for food and shelter between 12.30 and 3.30, and 145 were otherwise provided for, total, 1,329, and 638 *men* were provided with free tickets for common lodging-houses.

It is difficult to estimate the pressure towards vice that this paucity of accommodation for women must imply. In addition to the lack of accommodation, it is often worse, and the price is higher, the reluctance to take women acting to raise prices. Also lodging-house keepers are very strict about exacting payment each night before the bed is used. This is necessary to protect their interests, but it means that even temporary distress may drive a woman on the streets. "I must have my lodging money" is no unreal cry. I have,

in mingling with the women in lodging-houses, heard them describe having to "walk the streets" if short of work, and in my own lodging-houses it has frequently been necessary to give temporary trust to industrial women, whose earnings are small, over holiday seasons or temporary slackness of employment. Of course, there is some risk in doing so, but frequently every penny has been honestly paid up.

It should be carefully considered :

1. That women's occupations being as a rule worse paid than men's, the provision of accommodation at a reasonable price is more necessary for them. Instead of being dearer, accommodation should be cheaper ; indeed, 4d. per night is quite as much as a poor woman can pay in proportion to her earnings.

2. That it is more necessary for a woman than for a man that accommodation should be cleanly and sanitary. Men in even dirty working clothes can obtain employment as labourers, but a woman's employment depends largely on her appearance.

3. A self-supporting woman is even more than a man at the mercy of sudden fluctuations and liable to lose employment. The very nature of her employment renders her liable to loss of it. (Thus in a recent inquiry into Liverpool lodging-houses there were found in them 176 *prostitutes*, but the re-

maining women were domestic servants, dress-makers, cigar-makers, hawkers, charwomen, &c.)

4. It is to the interest of the community to prevent by every means in its power the solitary, unprotected, self-supporting woman from drifting down and becoming the predatory woman, *i.e.*, the beggar or prostitute. The *necessary* provision is a safe and sanitary place to live.

5. It may be noted that while efforts are continually made to redeem those who *have fallen*, often with small success, but little attention is paid to provision for the self-respecting, self-supporting woman in extremity.

6. The difficulty of finding lodging accommodation extends through all classes of women. It is not confined to the poorest. Crowds of girls and women are yearly sucked into our large towns: teachers, shop-girls, clerks, as well as industrials, but little care has been bestowed on the problem, "Where are they to live?"

7. The solitary unhappy woman often falls a prey to drink; thus she becomes undesirable and sinks through different grades till she is found at last in the lowest.

Illustrations without number might be given of these points. It is not a need confined to London, though London statistics have been given as the only ones available.

Mrs. Bramwell Booth writes of *Dundee:*

"There are so many hundreds of girls working in the mills here, whose homes are in other parts of the country, that the question of suitable lodgings for these girls is a serious one, and I think the city ought to do something in the way of providing decent lodgings. When I was last here I learnt that a girl would hire a room and sub-let it to other girls. The state of overcrowding as a result was shocking, and the drinking among young girls is appalling. We want to get the lodging-houses reformed."

Speaking of her own Metropole she says:

"We had a struggle to get girls to take advantage of this place. It was something new for the girls to lodge in a place where they were not allowed to bring in drink, and where they had to be in at a decent hour of night. . . . Now we have got our full complement, but *it does not amount to a drop in the ocean* compared with the number of homeless mill girls in Dundee."

A great many of the girls do not earn more than 9s. 4d. Their food and board costs 6s. 6d., or 8s. 6d. with a cubicle. Not much margin here for "bad times!" It is significant that she says "without some municipal reform" it would be difficult to get the girls into the right sort of accommodation.

In an Appendix [1] will be found particulars of girls making use of a girls' hostel in Bir-

[1] Appendix IV.

mingham, which greatly needs enlargement, and also particulars of the sort of cases that fall into my own lodging-houses in Oldham.[1] Such cases must recur again and again in every large town, more especially in industrial centres, where a large number of women and girls are self-supporting.

In this connection it might perhaps be well to draw attention to the fact that while the *young* girl is likely to figure largely in the popular imagination, there are, as a matter of fact, women of all ages in just as dire need. The number of "spinsters" in the working classes may not be as large as in other classes; still, it is considerable. In the crowded working-class home the girl is often crowded out by the death of father or mother, or marriage of a brother, and after years of home life may have to become a "lodger." But women are not desired as private lodgers—they are more trouble and more in the way. Besides these spinsters, the early death of industrial men in many occupations leaves widows, with or without children. A woman with even one child, earning small wages, is much put to it to find accommodation, and frequently has to change lodgings, or pay out of all proportion to her earnings. There is also the "separated wife," alas! only too common. These have to live somewhere. It does not

[1] Appendix V.

further the interests of public morality if they are crowded into already overcrowded homes. Then there are the "old age pension" women, often self-supporting to the last. But even a small home cannot be kept on 5s. weekly, and it is much to be desired that self-respecting accommodation should be found for these poor women, even if charity has to provide partially the suitable environment. I believe that the 5s. could be made to cover expenses if the lodging was co-operative, but not otherwise. This part of the problem will tend to increase. There often is not accommodation within working-class homes for the old, and they drift miserably from daughter to daughter, or lodging to lodging, unwanted, whereas all they want is a self-respecting place to live, other than the workhouse.

As exemplifying the way in which a woman may drift down from the upper classes, the case may be cited of the adopted daughter of Charles Reade, found wandering on the Embankment. Miss Maccabe, whose father was a distant relative of Charles Reade's, was brought up by him, and became interested in the stage, first acting Josephs in "It's Never Too Late to Mend" at the age of eleven. She married young, and unhappily, and continued her connection with the stage for many years, with gradually decreasing success. When she could no longer get an engagement, she went

as nurse-companion to an old lady who turned out to be insane. She then tried for a place as parlourmaid, but wanted "experience"! She then tried as a nurse, but found she was expected to be a general servant, and on a wage of 4s. a week her work was so incessant that she got a heart attack, and was dismissed as not strong enough. She was then driven to the lodging-house, having nowhere to go. She says:

"I used to think you could get a bed in London for sixpence, but I have always had to pay ninepence, and often and often I have had to go without food to pay for it. It would be cheaper to get a room, but then one must pay a week's rent in advance. When I haven't been able to pay—and one always has to pay beforehand—I have had to walk about all night. One night it was pouring with rain, I tried to get into the casual ward. I went to two, but I was turned away at both, because I ought to have come earlier. I have tried sitting on the Embankment, but the police won't let you sleep, and indeed I don't believe I could have slept, such dreadful men came and sat next me.

"But that, too, is the awful part of the life in the lodging-house—the kind of people one has to associate with. Some of the women seem to be drinking or drunk all day long. It is dreadful, too, to see young girls there."

In the lodging-house Miss Maccabe's daily occupation was to answer advertisements.

"I have lived on tea and bread, I have spent my last penny in buying stamps and notepaper. I have answered dozens of advertisements without result."

She gained many curious side-lights on what advertisers expect. A widower expected all the domestic work and washing, and "lady-like companionship" for his daughters, on a salary of 5s. a week!

It is pathetic that she helped others worse off than herself, when she had a little money.

"I am always glad I was able to help a family I found one night late in the street. One was a poor old woman who was shaking all over and crying bitterly. They had tramped some way and were too late to get into the workhouse. I was able to get her and her granddaughter a bed in the lodging-house and some food—they were famishing."

Her outlook when found was very sad.

"I have sold my clothes," she said, "rather than ask for help. I have really nothing now but what I am wearing; and my shoes—I have tramped in them so much—they will hardly hold together. My sole anxiety is to be able to earn sufficient to pay for a room and get some food."

Doubtless through the publicity given by the press, this "modest ambition" was gratified in this particular case. But this is not a solitary one.

Mr. Davies devotes a whole chapter to describing the state of men who sink down into utter homelessness and become mad. Their personal condition is so vile that no one will receive them

into lodging-houses or shelters, and they wander about regardless of circumstances, even pouring rain, homeless and hopeless in the midst of our vaunted civilisation.[1] I am convinced that such woman derelicts exist, but their case is even more desperate. Strangely enough, in our topsy-turvy world *drink* is easier to obtain than food. A woman, if she asks a man for money, is frequently "treated" to drink. There exist in all our large towns a class of women utterly degraded, continually taken up as "drunk and incapable," if not for moral offences. They run up an almost incredible number of short sentences, and as soon as released are again in the hands of the police. I am convinced that in most cases these women are utterly incapable of self-control. They either belonged originally to the "feeble-minded," and have drifted down, incapable of self-control or self-support, or they have become feeble-minded through vice or alcoholic excess. It is not only wicked to treat them as we do, but it is a grave social peril, for they get to a point at which they will solicit young boys for a penny towards lodgings, and in their diseased, irresponsible state, practically mad, they may do incalculable harm. Not infrequently crimes of violence have their origin in these women, for they are proverbially irritable and uncon-

[1] "The Lowest State of Man," pp. 161–168.

trolled in tongue,[1] and frequently quarrel with each other and have to be separated by police. Such female derelicts ought to be permanently taken off the streets. In some "low" neighbourhoods the night is made hideous by their cries and screams. What is the effect on the surrounding child-life? It came to my knowledge that such a woman, in drink, was pouring out vile and filthy language to a circle of children under the windows of a Y.W.C.A. The attention of a policeman was called to her condition. "It's no use locking her up," he said, "she's only just out of prison!" A feeble-minded girl, whose career I traced, was put in the workhouse, released, taken up for theft; put in the workhouse, released, returned with an illegitimate child, after which the child died and she went out of her mind; she was put in an asylum, but released as "cured." Shortly after she was in the hands of the police, ejected from a public-house for drunkenness and quarrelling. I do not know if she served a term of imprisonment, but when next I saw her she had an illegitimate child in her arms, which survived! She was "living with a man." The last time I saw her the child had been taken from her by the N.S.P.C.C., and was being supported by the community in the Workhouse Scattered Home! She calmly told me it was for

[1] P. 252, "Beggars."

drunkenness. She was "living with a man," and though incapable of taking care of her own child was left free to have others! Comment is unnecessary

Is it not self-evident that it is a community's duty?—

1. To see that there is self-respecting and sanitary accommodation for the industrial self-supporting woman as a means of prevention.

2. To make sure that the provision for *destitution* is ample and available.

3. To take control over the feeble-minded destitute or criminally incapable, and segregate them from the general population. This is a separate question, but allusion must be made to it as the tramp ward is absolutely unsuitable and inefficient, and neither police nor workhouse arrangements are at present effective.

CHAPTER VIII

MUNICIPAL LODGING-HOUSES FOR WOMEN

"The individual is no longer the *aim* of human endeavour. The individual will reappear in new sacredness, when, by the promulgation of the *social* law, the rights and duties of individual existence are made to harmonise with that law."—MAZZINI.

THERE is no doubt that the growth of the common lodging-house and the furnished room creates a problem that must be faced. A passage from "Mark Rutherford's Deliverance" will illustrate the condition we have to remedy:

"I did not know, till I came in actual contact with them, how far away the classes which lie at the bottom of great cities are from those above them; how completely they are inaccessible to motives that act on ordinary human beings, and how deeply they are sunk beyond ray of sun and stars, immersed in the selfishness naturally begotten of their incessant struggle for existence and the incessant warfare with society. Our civilisation seemed nothing but a thin film or crust lying over a volcanic

pit, and I often wondered whether some day the pit would not break up through it and destroy us all."

To any one plunged suddenly into such a nether world it must needs seem a hell, yet we have but to read the narratives of explorers, and especially such as W. H. Davies, who have been actual sharers of the life, to find that certain human qualities of friendliness and kindness may shine there more conspicuously than in higher circles.

Nevertheless the fact remains of a tremendous pressure existing in a direction contrary to the welfare of mankind.

To understand this we have but to read the remarks of W. H. Davies on navvies :[1]

"Navvies in common lodging-houses receive much contempt from pedlars, grinders, and true beggars—the navvy is more often than not a timid beggar. . . . In this instance charity is certainly not misplaced, for this man would rather work than beg. The navvy is a real working man, but he has to travel for work from place to place. Being a rough, uncouth, ill-mannered man, he has no other option than to live in a common lodging-house, even though he is earning as much money as a good mechanic."

Concerning the relation of such men to women and the road of deterioration there are a few pregnant sentences :[2]

[1] P. 213. [2] P. 251.

"There is one man who favours the presence of women (in the common lodging-house), and that is the true working man who is travelling for work, and after paying his last few coppers for a bed, sits hungry in the lodging-house kitchen, for he is a poor beggar indeed. As a rule the men are indifferent, but these women always guess his secret and pity him."

If this charity were all we could admire it, but we read :[1]

"After a woman has been on the road a little time and become familiar with lodging-houses and begging, she finds little difficulty in maintaining a husband who will neither work, beg, nor steal—especially if she has a child for the poor fellow to look after." "The most hard-hearted cannot withhold their charity for the child's sake. Of course the father is as fond of his child as any other father would be, and he would do anything in reason for it —except work."

These unions are, of course, seldom accompanied by marriage, though two individuals thus preying on the community may remain faithful to each other through long periods, and cases have come to my knowledge of such couples who have dropped child after child into charitable institutions or the workhouse to be kept by the public. On the other hand, "light come, light go," in most common lodging-houses beds are for "doubles," not necessarily married. A woman can get

[1] P. 250.

a bed much more readily if she brings her "man," so the pressure exists on both sides in the direction of a life inimical to public welfare, on the man towards idleness, on the woman towards immorality and beggary. The Children Bill, bringing pressure on the community to support children dragged about by parents, will work good results if pressure is also put on parents not to produce more children to be kept by the community. But the great thing is to prevent pressure in the direction of an idle, vagrant life. Sooner or later we must deal with the vagrancy question. If the casual ward is placed under police control, and the whole vagrancy question treated from a national standpoint, then more than ever pressing becomes the question of the proper provision of lodging accommodation for the genuine working-man.

It must be remembered also that not a small number of boys drift into the common lodging-house. The chapter[1] concerning these "half-boys," "half-men" is gruesome reading: "Any common lodging-house which harbours a gang of these half-boys, half-men is a very dangerous place to live." "It is these young bullies, and not grown-up men, that make the slums of London and other large cities so dangerous." "They feel the strength of the coming man and they are anxious to

[1] Pp. 86–88, "Beggars."

try it." "What makes full-grown men so much afraid of these half-boys and half-men is their entire recklessness. They will use poker, fists, or anything that is near their hands." Davies saw an old man's eye put out because he asked that his tea should not be shaken.

Now what must be the danger to the woman or young girl, and what must such become from contact with these? It is too horrible to contemplate, yet young girls also are repeatedly to be found in common lodging-houses. Sometimes mothers, themselves drunken and immoral, will drag round girls of 14 or 15 in such surroundings ; sometimes girls out of slum homes, where there is no room for them, go and live even in the lowest lodging-houses ; sometimes through misfortune girls fall into them.

Is it not, therefore, imperative that separation of the sexes should be insisted on in all common lodging-houses? It would be easy to demand such as a condition of registration. We should never think of providing in tramp wards for "couples," yet, unfortunately, even in municipal lodging-houses the old tradition of the common lodging-house has been maintained. Thus in the municipal lodging-house at Huddersfield, which I personally visited, accommodation was provided for a few single women and for "married couples," apart from

the provision for "men only," but as no separate sitting-room or lavatory accommodation for "women only" was provided, the women, married and single, were with the "married" men, and the same pressure existed in the direction of illicit connections between the sexes; indeed, I heard the changes that had occurred in certain "couples" freely discussed. I understand that since my visit this lodging-house has been greatly reformed, but still the fact remains that in several places where municipal accommodation for women has been provided (Croydon, Darwen, and Peterhead, besides Huddersfield) the old plan of the common lodging-house has been followed. In Darwen, however, the sexes are separate. Now, in insisting on the necessity of municipal provision for the genuine workingman, I am anxious that the similar need of the genuine working-woman should not be forgotten. It is true that the numbers to be provided for will not be so great, but every town should have, as a matter of course, a place where a self-respecting woman can find refuge in temporary emergency, or live, if her income is a very narrow one, a self-supporting life. Concerning the need of men, I believe we cannot estimate the advantage that Germany has reaped from its "Workmen's Homes" and its relief stations and way-ticket system, as against our wretched provision and tramp

ward. Sooner or later the community must replace the pressure in the direction of idleness and beggary by pressure in the direction of self-respecting self-support. It is often stated that Rowton Houses exert a prejudicial influence because men can live there in comfort without family ties. It is forgotten that as the housing problem increases yearly in intensity, the class of homeless men must be on the increase, and that if public well-regulated provision did not spring up, the problem would only be masked. In the obscurity of our slums, houses pass over to furnished rooms, or weekly lodging-houses, or registered lodging-houses. It is true that the common lodging-house provision of London for men shows only a slight increase (25,718, 1904, 25,976, 1909), but can it be doubted that, if Rowton Houses and other provisions had not increased, there would have been a definite increase of the lodging-house problem?

On the other hand, the example of Glasgow shows that municipal provision tends to replace the common lodging-house by a better style of "working man's hotel." The men's side of the question we must leave, simply stating that municipal provision has been successful, both in raising the standard and in proving that provision can be made without financial loss.

Full particulars of Glasgow Municipal

Lodging-house for Women are to be found in Appendix.[1] Over a series of years it has been self-supporting and has paid a higher dividend than the men's lodging-houses. It has been twice enlarged and now accommodates 248. But there is abundant evidence that it does not now cover Glasgow's need, for women who apply for beds are constantly turned away for want of room.[2]

Experience has shown that there is considerable fluctuation in demand. In a time of good trade both men and women come to the town to seek work. During a strike or a period of industrial distress the lodging-houses empty. This, of course, might be expected. Pressure exists in bad times in the direction of the workhouse, and those just on the edge of self-support are compelled to try other towns or go "in the house" for a season. An interesting experiment was tried at Oldham during the cotton strike of 1908. A cry was raised by the "unemployed" that men were "walking the streets" all night. Inquiry showed that the lodging-houses had many empty beds, amounting in total to some hundreds, and that a class of men casually employed had actually been pushed out. Some

[1] Appendix VI.

[2] A recent examination of Glasgow lodging-houses proved that the Municipal was "the only decent and safe lodging-house for women and girls."—Report of Special Committee of Presbytery.

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had entered the workhouse, some had tramped, but some, now homeless, virtually had been permanent dwellers in the lodging-houses. To disperse these and add to the tramp problem of the country was evidently a false policy. So a conference of the common lodging-house keepers of the town was called. As a cry had been raised for a free shelter, it was evidently to their interest to discourage what would compete with their trade. A free shelter would have been very prejudicial to Oldham interests, encouraging influx of beggars from other towns. There were the empty beds, and outside were the needy men. The lodging-house keepers agreed, after amicable discussion, that the case would be met by the issue of 100 free tickets per night by the police. They agreed to accept a reduced price, they stipulated that they should not be compelled to take any one who was to them a known bad character, such as they would not ordinarily admit. The experiment worked well ; for a fortnight the free tickets were issued by the police, and at a cost of about £14 the popular cry was allayed, the strike ceased, and the men, without being scattered, returned to work in their own town.

Now while the adoption of such a plan was a good method of meeting a time of *minimum* demand, the very same method is a grave mistake in time of *maximum* demand. Thus

the policy pursued by some Guardians of getting rid of a surplus of tramps, in time of extra pressure, by giving them tickets for common lodging-houses, is open to grave abuse, as the following case will illustrate.

The *Cambrian*, October 30, 1908, relates that on Saturday evening previous 204 tramps were sent to a certain lodging-house, and during the evening the workhouse master and two gentlemen paid a visit to the lodging-house and found a most disgraceful state of things: 150 tramps were clamouring for three beds, others were sleeping on the stairs and floors. It was stated that 75 per cent. of the men were sober, and a fair percentage were respectable. The lodging-house

> "was not fit for a dog to live in, and the smell was abominable. The conditions were 'worse than the Black Hole of Calcutta.' The police gave the tickets to the men to get rid of them, and so place the responsibility on the Guardians. It was stated that no blame attached to the sanitary inspectors, for 'they could not do their work as effectively as they would, because the Town Council would not do its duty.'"

Men were found "sleeping on shelves, and water dropping from the ceiling on to where they were sleeping." The lodging-house keeper denied that 150 men were clamouring for three beds; he said there were "only 70"! He said: "The Guardians pay me

4d. per night, but I never know how many are coming. If I had a contract it would be different and I would build additional accommodation."

I have been assured repeatedly, by working-men forced to travel, that decent accommodation all over the country is most difficult to obtain, and often not to be had. Working-men are forced into the tramp ward by absence of accommodation, even if able and willing to pay, and I have heard of a case in which lodging-houses and tramp wards were full, and on attempting "sleeping out" the man was arrested! He unfortunately tried private grounds, and was suspected of poaching (it was a country town), and he got three months for his uncomfortable bed!

It is evident that only the community can afford to provide for the *maximum* need and let beds stand idle. If we think of accommodation for the upper classes we shall see that hotel accommodation, limited to minimum or average need, would fail to supply times of extra pressure. The prices charged cover loss for the proprietor. But in the case of working-men's demand, the charge cannot be high, and the proprietor must aim no higher than the *average* need. Yet it is to the interest of the community that something approximating the *maximum* need should be met. It is brought as a charge against municipal

lodging-houses that even when they are built they are "not full." But the presence of a demand so great that, as in the Glasgow women's municipal lodging-house, 99 per cent. of the beds are *always* full, shows that the supply is not equal to the demand.

It is to the interest of the community to see that at all times self-respecting men and women have a safe shelter, in which the pressure towards beggary and vice is minimised. What the conditions often are is almost too horrible to relate. I heard a working man call Huddersfield Municipal "a palace" to what he was accustomed to in the common lodging-house. He had just been forced to sleep in a place where an open room was the accommodation for married couples and a pail in the middle of the room the only sanitary convenience.

Such things should not be allowed in a civilised country, and the irony of the situation is that they occur in "registered" common lodging-houses licensed by the authorities, and many of them bearing the legend: "*Model* lodging-house, registered. Good clean beds." Such places all over the country are passed by authorities, and are the only places where working-men on travel can live. It is said to take six weeks to make a working-man into a beggar, or tramp, dependent often on a woman for support.

Therefore (1) it is in the interests of the community that clean, well-regulated, and sanitary accommodation should be provided up to *maximum* need.

(2) It is in the interests of the community that by rigid enforcement of separation of the sexes, and sanitary provisions, the unregulated common lodging-house should gradually be suppressed, and replaced by houses where the travelling population live under regulation, where the police have oversight, and where law and order can be kept. If this is necessary in the case of men, it is doubly necessary in the case of women. They are much more readily exploited by private interest. Indeed, there is grave cause to fear that in many cases lodging-houses that take women, or for women only, become involved in the "white slave" traffic. My experience in women's lodging-houses, and that of a lady who lived a month in London lodging-houses, lead me to fear that the deputies, if not the proprietors, could not be exonerated from pressure in the direction of vice.

Therefore, more even than men, women need to be protected by perfectly disinterested provision. The community that does not care for its women—what shall we say of it? Even in barbarous ages the women of a city were regarded as those whom it was the duty of men to protect, though at the cost of their lives.

It is left to our "industrial" age to allow the woman to be exploited. Ill-paid, overworked, even the decent industrial woman is often forced down into the depths, yet the community that has profited by her labour has scarcely begun to recognise that she has a right to protection from the worst perils of the streets.

It is well known that in our large towns the pariah class of women is counted by thousands, but of the circumstances that forced them to be what they are little is known. How often is the elementary want, that of a safe place to live, the determining factor in a life? Instances innumerable might be given. One will suffice. Owing to the lack of accommodation in Birmingham Girls' Hostel, a servant girl, suddenly thrown out of a place, had to be refused. She went into an ordinary lodging-house, and was speedily among the fallen. Sister Alice, the noble woman to whose efforts the success of the hostel is due, has felt so cruelly the need, that she said she *must* resign unless enlargement was undertaken. She could not face forcing girls into perdition for lack of accommodation.

Throughout England there is hardly any proper provision for women. This is a sad, bare fact which throws a lurid light on the constantly increasing demand for rescue-

home accommodation. Private efforts will be alluded to in the next chapter, but outside the small municipal provision already mentioned there has not been, up to the present, any effort to cope with the woman's side of the question, save that in Manchester persistent agitation over about six years has at last resulted in a women's municipal, the first in England, save a small attempt in Oldham, now under my own superintendence. This Manchester lodging-house for 220 women is being built at the cost of £11,300. The charges for beds are not yet fixed. It will be opened in the spring (1910).

This experiment will be watched with great interest. It should be accompanied by the refusal of licences to mixed common lodging-houses, and great care should be taken in choice of a matron and to secure some women's interest in the management. It is easy to arrange prices and general conditions so as to exclude those catered for—women must have extra facilities for washing and drying clothes, and they prefer to make their own tea and cook their own food. As their earnings are small and precarious, the refusal of such facilities acts as a bar. Even if a cup of tea is supplied for a halfpenny, a good many cups of tea to suit individual taste can be made from a pennyworth of tea. So the poor woman is actually the loser from

the supply of a cheap cup! Such details as this need careful study to make the accommodation suitable for the class catered for. It must not be forgotten that a woman who pays for her bed is a *customer at an hotel, not an object of charity*. If the hotel does not suit her she will go to worse conditions, which supply comforts or convenience. In this she is but human!

The crux of the whole matter, however, lies in the fact that the right kind of accommodation can hardly be supplied to the poor working-woman except at cost price. That is to say, there is no margin for private profit. It is this that has led to the paucity of lodging-house accommodation for women all over the country. We are ruled by self-interest, and, as I have several times shown, lodging-houses for women are not so profitable as lodging-houses for men. Therefore they tend to decrease, and women are forced to club to take a furnished room or to pair with men. But this gravely accentuates immorality, as such women are beyond control. Even a brothel can be dealt with, but a couple of women may live immorally and the police cannot deal with them. Every effort should be made to get the floating woman to accept safe and sanitary lodging, where, during the dangerous hours of night, she is safely housed, and not left a predatory menace to the

young men of our cities. In the Cardiff investigation letters were received from respectable young men complaining that they could not pass through certain thoroughfares without being solicited. If any considerable number of women live in this manner, a pressure exists on the hard-working and industrious to join them, just as pressure exists on the working man to become a beggar.

Just above the workhouse is a stratum of women struggling hard for self-maintenance, in which, by every possible means, the community should encourage them. If one by one they fall out of the ranks of labour, they henceforth are supported by the community. The wages of vice, the cost of workhouse, prison, reformatory, rescue-home, is a charge on the community. To help such women to make their last stand for honest self-support is not only a community duty, it is suicidal to do otherwise. For far beyond the sums of money paid for secure and sanitary housing are the sums spent in remedying the results of the legacy of disease, death, crime, insanity caused by the final fall of a woman from self-support to a parasitic existence.

Yet this cost is grudged, and few communities yet face it, or even begin to see the problem in its true light.

The London County Council, in connection

with a scheme for the housing of the working-classes, obtained, in 1902, estimates for a women's lodging-house. The facts which led them to contemplate this may be quoted from the medical officer's report:

"Since the Council has had the supervision of common lodging-houses much has been done to provide water-closets and washing accommodation properly separated for the two sexes, in houses that are used jointly, but *this is still far from complete.* In my report of 1897 I pointed out that the accommodation for women was *generally inferior* to that provided for men, *though the charge made for lodging was often higher.*"

The architect designed a lodging-house of four storeys for 57 women on the cubicle plan; area, 430 square feet. Arrangements for sixty lockers, four water-closets, four lavatory basins, one feet-washing trough, two bathrooms, lodgers' washhouse and drying-room. Cost, £7,500; furniture, £450; site, £1,950. It was proposed to charge 6d. per night for cubicles, 9d. for three double ones. It was estimated that a staff of matron, day-woman, bed-woman, relief-woman, and night-woman would be required, and would absorb 41 per cent. of expenditure. This estimate of staff seems rather large, as in a women's lodging-house it is cheaper to employ lodgers on part service than to staff completely for all cleaning. With this estimate the gross out-

goings were stated as £505 10s. 2d., and the gross receipts as £536 8s. 9d. There appeared to be only £24 for interest on land and buildings estimated to cost £9,450. It was stated that "it is, of course, impossible to make so small a house self-supporting." An estimate of £1,500 was asked for in order that a detailed scheme might be got out "to ascertain with more exactitude whether the dwellings could be built to yield a surplus." The Committee "did not expect to avoid a deficiency on the lodging-house."

It is hardly wonderful that on such a report the scheme should be abandoned. Recently efforts have been made to get the London County Council to erect a women's hostel. Signatures were obtained of 300 women willing to live in it if erected. It would have been self-supporting, but the petition was refused. Yet the example of Glasgow shows that it *is* possible to erect a women's lodging-house that pays a reasonable percentage (between 4 per cent. and 5 per cent. on first cost). In the case of both men's and women's municipal lodging-houses, the great thing necessary is to keep down the cost per bed to a sum *within* what can be met by estimated receipts. Without this it is of course hopeless to attempt to make them self-supporting. The amount that should be expended is easy to estimate. But the very

fact that *without* such capital expenditure the need *cannot be met*, that women are peculiarly unable to find the necessary means for capital expenditure and to combine to erect for themselves suitable accommodation, that they are liable to be deprived of accommodation by the private interests of men, and that they need protection, should lead the chivalry of the community to determine that *at all costs* a safe and sanitary lodging-house for women ought to be provided in every town. This need not prevent common-sense precautions from being taken to begin on lines likely to meet with success. Financial profit cannot be anticipated; it is for this reason that the problem is pressing; if there were profit the need would be quickly supplied. But financial loss may be minimised or prevented if in smaller towns a house is taken and adapted, and the need gradually met, while gradual pressure is put on the insanitary lodging-houses. In towns where a bolder policy is needed, cost of erection should be kept within a certain cost per bed, as in Glasgow.

Reading has passed a resolution to try a women's municipal lodging-house, and this concludes the scanty efforts in this direction at present.

Liverpool ladies tried hard to stir the City Council, and after three deputations a special sub-committee of the Housing Committee was

appointed, which advised the purchase of a suitable house and the provision of 50 beds. Colonel Kyffin Taylor, in an able speech on July 28, 1909, supported the recommendation, pointing out deficiencies. The Head Constable said in a report: "I have long been of opinion that there is need for some accommodation such as is suggested in the draft report, and it was with the hope that its provision might be considered that I wrote as I did last year; and I beg to refer you to my letter of 3rd July last to the medical officer of health on the subject. I see no reason for changing the opinions then expressed, and I agree entirely with the conclusions set out in the draft report." There was, however, interested opposition from the Liverpool Lodging-House Company, Ltd., and the proposal was negatived by 53 to 27.

Probably not until it has been effectively realised that women, who often constitute a majority in the population of a city, have a right to settle problems arising out of industrialism, and widely affecting their own sex, will the strength of the plea for proper shelter for women at the hands of the community be realised. Industrial chivalry has yet to be elicited, as community chivalry must replace the vanishing chivalry of the individual.

CHAPTER IX

PRIVATE LODGING HOMES FOR WOMEN

"The poverty of the poor is the chief cause of that weakness and inefficiency which are the causes of their poverty."—Professor MARSHALL.

IT is a remarkable feature of English society that any great need arising in the national life is usually first met by private effort. Thus schools and most of our charitable institutions have begun, and then by degrees State or municipal activity has taken over what at first was private, as a province of community care. The royal law, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," thus finds community fulfilment, and it should do so through community care just in proportion as it becomes impossible to the private individual. From ancient days the virtue of hospitality to the stranger has been a part of religious duty, and the question, "If ye do good to them that do good to you, what thank have ye?" is just as applicable to-day as in old times.

"The stranger within our gates," however, meets with scant courtesy except from the very poor, unless well able to take care of himself. Nevertheless, there is a fund of community sensitiveness which at present takes wrong channels and greatly adds to our problems. Some part of our community duty can never be met till we look on it in a new light. However much our hearts may go out to a poor man or woman, a stranger and destitute, loathing accompanies recognition of dire need. We cannot if we would take a stranger into our homes. The greater the need the more we turn away. A striking article in the *Manchester Guardian* for January 11, 1910, by Mme. Halidé Saleh, on "The Petrified Soul," illustrates the point. She describes a blind beggar standing with "his hands eternally stretched towards the tumult of the carriages and the movement of the human crowd"; she describes him "sitting in the midst of the warmth of the sun, shut in by eternal and impalpable darkness."

"I feel, I guess," she says, "the meaning of grief and the terrible demand of those hands. It is not bread they beg, but a human touch. This imprisoned, voiceless, motionless soul prays. It begs for the touch of a human hand in order to save it from petrifying. If one of the soft hands could but touch those hands that beg . . . I feel I should distinguish in this disgusting mass of human flesh the struggle of the petrified ice-covered soul to break its

ice. Perhaps I should see the poison of long cold loneliness melting and disappearing. But when I am close to those hands, conquered by disgust and fear, I run away without answering the prayer of which I alone have guessed the meaning."

Hardly any one can credit the frozen isolation that descends on the soul of many a poor solitary stranger. What so terrible as isolation in the midst of a crowd? In my tramp experiences the weight of this isolation has pressed on me. To enter a town in which you have not one link with living souls. To pass along the streets and know there is not for you one open door. To see the looks of passers by averted from you as they look askance at your poor raiment and set you down as—a tramp! I have sat side by side as a "lady" on a bench with a poor wayfaring man and elicited the story of his life: a home, far in the past; service of his country that broke home ties—father, mother, brothers, sisters, past and gone. Not a tie to life. A trade that has grown difficult to follow through modern competition. A weary, aimless drifting in search of work. But for one or two *men* who have unbosomed themselves to me, I could count scores of *women* in similar case. Women with a past, often not an ignoble past. Women who once were mothers, children scattered, old age coming on. Drifting—whither? "The House," feared, dreaded,

looms in front, perhaps the gleam of brightness of an old age pension. But the present! Is it any wonder the poor souls take to drink? What do we owe to such "strangers?" Cannot we take them into pity and find them what they most want, "a home"? It is tragic to read that even in the chance and transitory shelter of a common lodging-house women "make the place too much of a home."[1] "The woman is instinctively inclined to make the place a home, but the man more often uses it simply as a place wherein to eat and sleep." "These women are in the kitchen almost the whole day, continually using the cooking utensils and the fire; they wash the former and keep the hearth clean." These womanly occupations are said to be obnoxious to "the poor bachelor, who is more indifferent to cleanliness; he complains not only that he cannot get near the fire, but that there is not room enough on the tables to lay his food, which is not often the truth."

Ought not these womanly instincts to be provided scope? Is not this the line of salvation? To keep the heart in a woman, to prevent her isolation, to give her still "a home," if only in a lodging-house, is not this her salvation? It is touching that in the Hanbury Street Salvation Army Shelter, where

[1] "Beggars," p. 247.

a bunk can be had for twopence, there are women who have been there for years. Poor as it is, it is "home" to them, and stands between them and the workhouse. Is it not to the interest of the community to keep these poor souls afloat, to reach out "the touch of a human hand to save them from petrifying"?

If *because* of our privileges, because of our warm, comfortable, clean homes, we *cannot* say to such, "My sister, come home," surely it rests upon us to do it in some community way. And if because as yet we count for little in community life, and the chivalry of men fails to respond to us, we cannot now get this taken up as a community duty, then all the more must we struggle by private enterprise to find out the way.

We must do this to deliver our own souls. In the article on "The Petrified Soul" the gifted author goes on to say:

"When light and heat leave the crowded street, when all beings fall to rest in the darkness, I find myself in the densest part of the dark spaces, in the very form of the beggar. With the self-same prayer I stretch out *my* hands into the dark nothingness. Then before this eternal silence I feel my soul turning to stone. What the beggar begs of the sun, of mankind, and of the world, I demand of Truth and Eternity. (Perhaps a spiritual form of that beggar's disgusting ugliness keeps Truth and Divinity from me.) With this thought, in the very depth of the coldness and darkness of my disbelief, my soul, like the soul of the beggar, feeling that its prayer

may be eternally answerless, in the obscurity of nothingness, slowly turns to stone."

Who will not recognise this as a true picture of many a woman's soul? Shut in by modern conditions from that outgoing benevolence which is the very instinct of a woman's heart; crudely convinced by modern propaganda of the folly of giving to the individual beggar; surrounded by "society" claims, yet convinced of the hollowness of society, "in the densest parts of the dark spaces," in the poverty of soul born of riches, there are those who are weighted by the mystery of life, demanding something, they hardly know what, of Truth and of Eternity. "Coldness and darkness of disbelief," disbelief in human nature, disbelief in the Divinity that allows "hands stretched out into space like eternal questions," settles on the soul, and it becomes stone. Better than this is the portion of the poor in whom is kept a heart of pity, and of whom it is said, "Many a poor fellow would have gone supperless to bed, and begun another weary day's march without breakfast, were it not for some thoughtful and unselfish beggar-woman in a lodging-house kitchen."

Therefore *for our own sakes* we women must lay hold of this woman's problem and find a way out. We must say that there shall be no town throughout the length and breadth

of our land where the poor stranger woman cannot find safe shelter, a place which, if her need is great, she may call "home."

To this need many are slowly awaking. There are many places that afford a night's shelter to the destitute, but they are only clearing-houses; the very fact that a girl or woman has stayed there a night or two debars her from further shelter. Besides this there are numbers of self-supporting women who, because liberty is their last asset, will not enter any place where that liberty is surrendered, but will make use of places where they are free, and can come and go without "telling their business." Is not this also a noble instinct? In this age of freedom we are being slowly driven to contemplate the necessity for depriving of freedom some of our fellow-creatures. Slowly public opinion is hardening against "the tramp." But this name of terror is very indiscriminately applied. It is folly to class with, or force into, the vagrant class any man or woman who can be kept self-supporting and self-respecting. It is folly in this age of migration to deprive the industrial population, by sternly repressive measures, of mobility. Cesspools of illpaid labour, accumulating in slum neighbourhoods, are at least as grave an evil. What we need to do, at the same time that we make the law more strict, is to see to it that "the stranger

within our gates" is provided with decent lodging. What can we say of such failures of public accommodation as are instanced by Geo. R. Sims in "Human Wales"? In an article on "The Tramps of Tredegar" he states that "there is no room in the workhouse" to which, by lack of housing accommodation in the neighbourhood, even respectable working men and women may be forced.[1] As a consequence "Tredegar has to lodge nightly an average of five hundred 'tramps.'" Whether, however, these should be considered as vagrants proper is doubtful, for it appears[2] that there are public works in South Wales which attract "tramps of the labouring class," and also it appears that Cardiff is a place whence a man, not a sailor, can ship. This may explain why men "in search of work" make South Wales their Mecca. After all the human stream must flow *somewhere*. Surely it is to the public interest to provide fit channels! But Tredegar *contracts* with common lodging-house keepers. To what does the community send them? "A low lodging-house, accommodating the worst type of male tramp, has only double beds. Into one bed are huddled at night two and often three." The Annual Report states: "The conditions in which many of these people were found to be sleeping were not only insanitary

[1] P. 46. [2] P. 73.

in the extreme, but almost beyond belief, disgusting and disgraceful, and conducive to immorality in its grossest form." Yet this was in registered houses, and with tickets paid for out of the public purse! On one occasion 447 people were found sleeping in space for 280. It may be said, "How does this touch the woman problem?" Note that accommodation for women, if provided at all, is often *double*. Note that to "share a bed" may mean to contract small-pox or some other loathsome disease.[1] These conditions are not peculiar to Tredegar. They are found all over England. Mr. G. R. Sims says of "Nether Neath" that on the banks of an unclean canal, which he calls "the Water of Death," he found common lodging-houses "in every way ill-adapted to the use to which they were put." Some of the "rooms" were mere cupboards. In each cupboard two tramps, strangers to each other, sleep nightly in one horrible bed. I have slept in such a "cupboard" in a common lodging-house, only protected from sharing with a stranger by having my friend with me. Several married couples and children were in the same room. A blind man and his dog were in the next cupboard. There were no fastenings, no doors —in fact, only imperfect partitions—and—the bugs dropped from the ceiling on the beds!

[1] F. 52.

There is a depth still greater. Let me quote Mr. Sims :[1]

"The most terrible place in Neath is a large mixed lodging-house, that is to say a lodging-house for both sexes mixed. In one room in this house I find eight double beds for 'mixed' occupation. Here there is not even an apology for a screen. Eight married couples, often with little children, sleep in this room nightly, and there is not even a board or rag or curtain to conceal them from each other. It is frequently the habit of the tramp to sleep nude. In the centre of the room is a large battered tin pail. With the exception of the beds, this utensil completes the 'inventory' of a dormitory which would be an outrage on even the elementary decency of the savage."

Precisely similar conditions I heard of, as related in another chapter, in the north of England. Mr. Mackereth has discovered them in the southern counties.

Is it not time that women at any rate rose up in a body to say, "We cannot tolerate in any English town mixed common lodging-houses ; our sex must at least be protected by separation." And if we *cannot* stir public sentiment to provide for women at public expense, then let us see that private provision is initiated. Only so can we save ourselves from callousness, only so can we save our fellow-women from unspeakable degradation.

To Mrs. Maufe, of Bradford, Yorkshire,

[1] P. 68.

belongs the honour of initiating a women's lodging-house (called the Bradford Women's Shelter) for her town. Full particulars will be found in an appendix.[1] I had myself the pleasure of sampling this under the following circumstances: Reaching Bradford when "on tramp" a night earlier than we were expected, we were unwilling to claim the hospitality of our friends before the right date, yet the terrible experience of the common lodging-house just related could not be repeated. We were clean after workhouse baths; we dare not risk getting vermin the night before going to a respectable house. The tramp ward also was not to be thought of; it was Friday, and we might be detained over Sunday. Besides, after our horrible experience in the tramp ward, we were afraid of a man who was said to "do as he had a mind" with the women inmates. Weary and dejected we took our scanty provisions to a station waiting-room, and there found the solution, a notice of the "Women's Shelter." We pawned a shawl, and found it truly an oasis in the desert.[2] Thus this private venture supplies a public want.

The Salvation Army, ever ready to meet a public need, has led the way with women's shelters or "Metropoles," which are practi-

[1] Appendix VII.
[2] "Glimpses into the Abyss," p. 131.

cally lodging-houses, none of them being for rescue work. The shelters for women are as follows :

Whitechapel, 276 beds at 2d.
Edinburgh, 118 beds at 1d., 2d., 4d., and 6d.
Glasgow, 133 beds at 4d.
Dundee, 103 beds at 4d. and 6d.
Bristol, 19 beds at 4d. and 6d.
Cardiff, 40 beds at 4d. and 6d.
Southampton, 44 beds at 4d. and 6d.
Liverpool, 108 beds at 4d. and 6d.
Leeds, 57 beds at 6d. ("Women's Temperance Hostel").

With reference to the Bristol and Liverpool shelters, I may say that I sampled them, and cannot praise the beds, general cleanliness, and kindness of the officers too highly. But I am sorry to say that the Bristol shelter had to be reduced in size, and the Liverpool shelter was not half-full. The reason for this was not far to seek. There may be some difficulty in filling places closely associated with one form of religious belief, but in neither was religion forced on us, so this is not the reason. I believe it is to be found in the fact that the women are not given facilities for cooking for themselves. If, as previously stated, a woman instinctively takes to cooking and washing, even if it is more difficult to provide facilities, to cross this elemental instinct is to make the place not "home." In the

"Ada Lewis" Shelter in Liverpool, while the bedroom accommodation was excellent, the living-room was uncomfortable; there were no facilities for drying clothes: there was no cosy corner and fireside, only a stove, on the pipe of which women attempting to dry their wet clothes frequently burnt them;[1] and the food, good and cheap, had to be bought ready cooked at the bar. It costs more to live thus, and also is unhomely. I believe Hanbury Street Shelter, London, is always crowded, but its twopenny beds are below market price. A shelter that charges the same as common lodging-houses cannot compete with them unless it offers something of the same kind of facilities for "doing for oneself." With a very little trouble the "Ada Lewis" Hostel could be made quite acceptable to the classes for which it is intended, but there is near to it a "Mission of Love," which provides at a lower price, and apparently gives greater facilities.

The Church Army in some places provides a little accommodation for women. Thus in Swansea, Talbot House, taken over by the Church Army in 1908, there is accommodation for 12 women. In Edinburgh, at 12, Hart Street, E., there is accommodation for respectable working women and those temporarily out of work. Total accommoda-

[1] These defects will soon be remedied.

tion 26, but only a portion of the beds are paid for. In 1908 a total of 1,376 beds were let.

We now pass on to individual effort to supply this social need. In this connection I must mention my own. Convinced of the need for women's lodging-houses, I was led to experiment in my own town. I was met by the usual objections : "not wanted," difficulties of control and sanitation, &c. However, I obtained a three-bedroomed cottage, and started tentatively with accommodation for six. After a year's experience the "lions in the path" disappeared. I had no difficulty in keeping full, had to refuse lodgers, found the women appreciated a home, and that as they speedily improved in cleanliness the sanitary difficulties were easily overcome. An opportunity offered to obtain a larger house to accommodate 28. The house was bought outright and altered at a cost of £100. Three houses cost £360 only. The middle one used as lodging-house therefore only cost about £120! The number of beds supplied in 1908 was 6,205, counting two children as an adult. The receipts were £110 11s. and expenditure £105 5s. 7d. Details will be found in the Appendix.[1] This lodging-house is for weekly lodgers. It is not registered as a common

[1] Appendix V.

lodging-house, and the charge is 4d. per night, 2s. per week.

While this house was being initiated the Town Council was also considering the question of a women's municipal lodging-house. They obtained a house, furnished it, put in a caretaker and settled prices without asking advice from ladies, other than perhaps their own relatives. The furnishing was only for 8 women; the caretaker sanctioned by the Health Committee was objected to by the police (the difficulty being got over by registering the house as a common lodging-house but not authorising the caretaker). An arrangement was made for lodgers to cook in the washhouse; the caretaker was paid a fixed salary, which made it not particularly to her interest to have lodgers. The price was fixed first at 6d. and later at 5d., and it was supposed that shopgirls, and even teachers, might come and reside! It was not wonderful, therefore, that the house failed to attract any but a few lodgers; as a matter of fact they were often turned away, as strict orders were given not to receive any dirty people—liberally interpreted by the caretaker! At the end of a year it was decided to discontinue the experiment as it had "failed." I was, however, privately approached, and offered the loan of the furniture if I would take over the house and bear all expenses. The fact that it must

be run at a loss caused me hesitation. On a basis of 8 beds, how could an expense of £22 for rent, £5 10s. 7d. for rates be met? However, there is pleasure in seizing "a falling flag," and after consideration I decided that by closing a small rescue home and amalgamating my rescue work with the lodging-house I could afford to experiment. By the close of the year I had worked the house up to accommodation for 20, and both my houses were full. It has proved most useful to have one house for casuals and the other for weekly lodgers. Curiously enough, the women requiring casual lodgings are often of a better stamp than the women in lower industrial occupations needing weekly accommodation. In 1908, when the accommodation was gradually raised to 20, 4,600 beds were supplied. The working expenses were £120 5s. 9½d.; receipts, £76 11s. 2d. Besides paying guests, 22 women or girls and 8 children were temporarily assisted. The rescue part of the work is virtually separate, a helper visiting the workhouse once a fortnight, visiting and investigating, seeing relations, and making inquiries about women or girls needing assistance. Only such as are suitable are received in the lodging-house freely, for a time sufficient to enable them to get on their feet. If lodgers in either house are in distress, they have to apply to the C.O.S., of which I am

Hon. Secretary, employing an experienced helper. Thus the work is interwoven, but any poor woman has her case considered, and we can find her lodging and temporary assistance in need, if she can be made self-supporting.

The most notable private contribution to the lodging-house problem in London is that of Miss Meredith Brown, namely Portman House, often called the "Women's Rowton." In another chapter various other efforts are mentioned that are suitable for a higher class, but this chapter relates to accommodation for women at a price accessible to the lowest class. Perhaps the Jewish "Sarah Pyke" House, 45, Great Prescot Street, Whitechapel, where board and lodging can be obtained for 1s. per day, might serve some of those. The Pimlico Ladies' Association, 31, Cumberland Street, provides at 1s. per day, but not for this class. The Victoria Hostel, 17 & 19, Newington Causeway, receives English and foreign girls from 3s. 6d. per week for cubicle, and has a very cheap restaurant attached, but is selective of its clients. The "Emily Harris" Home for Working Girls, opened June, 1908, Alfred Place, Tottenham Court Road, accommodates 40. The prices of the Church Army Hostels, 12s. 6d. and 9s. 6d., are above the reach of the poor.

Portman House, however, opened February

29, 1908, and connected with Shaftesbury Institute, Lisson Grove, near Marylebone Station, does receive really poor women. The story of how Miss Meredith Brown, moved by her actual knowledge of the hardships of the poor women, whom she had provided for in a temporary shelter, struggled to build a lodging-house accommodating 100 at a cost of £8,100, reads like a romance. One passage from her account may be quoted :

"'Oh, what *shall* I do? What *can* I do?' were the despairing words of a young woman whose husband had just left her. She had just arrived, hoping to sleep in the shelter. '*Can't* you take me in? I don't mind *where* I sleep, so long as it's clean, but I'm dead beat, and if I walk about to-night, I can't go to work in the morning. Work was slack, and I wasn't needed ; now I'm taken on. Oh, no ; I can't go to the "casual," or I'll lose it ; they won't let you out till it's too late for my work.' Another said : 'I'll be forced to go into a "doss-house" [common lodging-house], and the language ain't fit for a dog to hear ; it's something cruel, cussin', swearin', and drinkin' till two in the morning!' Another said : ''Ow does *I* get my living? I peels taters for a fried-fish shop ; I gits five shillings and me fend, but I 'as tu sleep out. My man's dead long since ; my gals is all doin' fur theirselves ; they don't trouble arter the likes o' me! I could get a *lie-down*, but it's the company one likes ; it's cheery-like when yer comes back.'"

I can myself testify to the homeliness of Portman House. Miss Brown is dead, but previous to her death, at her request, I lived

in Portman House as a sempstress for four nights. She wished me to point out small faults which might interfere with its success. But the main fact is that, disguised as a working woman, I received unsolicited testimony to its usefulness. I went in and out *clean*. This in itself speaks volumes. One woman told me it was "a heaven on earth" to the "doss-houses." Another waxed eloquent concerning its founder. "She do have her little fads, but it isn't one in a thousand who would 'a troubled her head about the likes o' us." The women, many of them of the roughest class, were quiet and orderly. There was not enough facility for cooking, but Miss Brown explained that they had not been able to obtain sufficient ground space to give more. Some of the rules, especially one about turning out during service hours on Sunday morning, pressed a little heavily, but I have reason to believe that the "peep behind the scenes" I was able to give Miss Brown would lead to the alteration of these. Such lodging-houses ought to be general in London, and an effort should be made to replace by them the "doss-houses" until the latter are extinct. Women of even the roughest class will live under regulation, in a way in which they cannot be expected to live in houses run for private interest. Many a woman who, weak and unprotected, in the bad surroundings of

the "doss-house" cannot keep straight, may live a decent life if provided with a place in which to live it.

There may be a few other semi-charitable attempts to house poor women in London, more of the nature of Rescue Homes than of Women's Hostels. The National Association for Women's Lodging Homes does not intend itself to open lodging-houses, but to carry forward the propaganda which may lead to the recognition and supply of the need. The Secretaries would welcome any information as to existing efforts or local enthusiasm.[1]

We must now refer to efforts in other parts of the country.

In Worcester Mrs. Berkeley on her own initiative opened a small lodging-house with 9 beds, charge 4d. per night. Cost of simple furnishing, £15 9s.; rent, £16; caretaker, £16; coal, £7; gas, £3 10s. No subscriptions, but at the start £28 was given. The expenses were met by receipts on half-year within £1. Women and children are taken. Lights out at 10 p.m.

In Ayr Colonel Vincent opened a lodging-house for women and children. The capital expenditure was £328, the current expenditure is £60 to £70. On three years' working, after paying current expenses, there is a balance of £50. The public subscribed

[1] See Appendix II.

£344 14s. 11d. in the first year. No rent is charged. The accommodation is for 22. Charge, 4d., and 1d. for children. Boys over 12 not admitted. In the three years, 5,737, 6,061, and 5,762 beds have been let to women and children. Fluctuations are, of course, inevitable, and there appears to be local change in housing also.

Forward movements in various towns are taking place.

In Birmingham a Girls' Hostel, already alluded to, called Shaftesbury House, is to be enlarged. A site has been bought for £1,500 and over £2,500 raised, but more is urgently required before building can be commenced. Girls are boarded for 5s. 6d. per week.[1]

In York and Aberdeen lodging-houses for women will shortly be opened. It may be useful to give an estimate of expense for a small lodging-house for 30.[2]

In Stockport, through the energy of *British Women*, a Women Worker's Home has been successfully inaugurated. It is registered to accommodate 15. From May 1, 1908, to April, 1909, 2,025 beds were let, and 102 women and girls passed through it in the first twelve months.

There are several other towns in which

[1] For urgent need see Appendix IV.
[2] *Cf.* Appendix VIII.

preliminary investigation has been made and public interest roused. Thus in Burnley the Rev. J. M. Julian visited the common lodging-houses. There were three in which women were admitted. One had only one room, in which 11 couples were sleeping, no partitions ; one baby and one child of three also. No window open.

In Warrington and Rotherham the Council have been approached.

In Bolton a lodging-house is contemplated. We may hope that ere long interest will become general throughout the country.

CHAPTER X

ENGLAND'S NEED

"Home is the resort
Of love, of joy, of peace and plenty, where,
Supporting and supported, polished friends
And dear relations mingle into bliss."—THOMSON.

HITHERTO I have written calmly, almost coldly. Patiently one must give facts. I have portrayed the need of the poorest and lowest. Well do I know that by this time many a poor soul is, humanly speaking, beyond salvation. Dragged through the mire for years, a victim to drink, her womanly instincts are perverted. She struggles, but she is in the grip of the demon; received into decent surroundings, she struggles hard, but sooner or later the madding thirst seizes her, she gets drunk. Then the worst in her may come to the top—profanity in which she has been cradled; unreasonable anger or irritability surging up from the depths of her wronged woman-nature, whose right is love; even unnatural violence. Then she has to go. For

the sake of others she cannot be kept in a private lodging-house, though under the stricter official rule of a municipal lodging-house, as in a workhouse, she can be rightly dealt with. And then, when sober, she will come creeping back, begging, weeping to be "taken home again," begging for "another chance." If it is given her she will struggle, struggle hard—yes, and often conquer ; keep that worst craze of all, the drink craze, within bounds, and manage to take so little she is allowed to stop, knowing she must go if she reaches excess. These are the pitiful victims of the past. Some are too far gone to save, humanly speaking. They are *our* victims, if we have allowed these things to be that made them what they are.

Sisters, have you lain awake in your comfortable beds and *imagined* where your sister Englishwomen are sleeping? Oh ! if you could have been with me, you would lie awake and moan for the *inferno* that exists not far from any one of you. George R. Sims saw a girl of sixteen run away shrieking, "I will not go in—I will not go in !" from the door of a low lodging-house. He asks : "What was it that the young girl had tried to escape from?" [1]

Girls, young girls, are dragged into such surroundings.

[1] "Human Wales," pp. 13–15.

We talk of "fallen women," we know they exist by thousands. But this is no kid-glove question. How did they fall? Whence did they fall?

It is not only for the poor, down-trodden and often sweated woman worker "in the depths" that accommodation is scarce. There is not sufficient accommodation for *any grade of working women*. At the top of the scale teachers, clerks, typists, hundreds of "women workers" find it hard to get a respectable place to live. The facts given in the first chapter show that the woman worker has to exist on less wages than men. For them night accommodation is all important. Yet even a comparatively well-paid woman may have to take rooms in a workmen's dwellings and live there isolated and lonely.

It is not so very many years since our British shores were not provided with life-boats and lighthouses. There were many wrecks. Are the streets of our great cities as safe as our shores?

Nay! under the urgency of our housing question even those possessed of homes may be thrust out, even mothers with little children may have to claim a lodging. In some towns even the home is not secure.

Can women, poor, struggling, disunited, themselves club to provide for their needs? It is impossible. Capital is needed to run

an hotel, capital is needed to start any co-operative kind of living, and not solitary lodgings but co-operative living is often the safest for a woman. Even those who can pay cannot provide themselves with tiny flats as at Hampstead Garden Suburb, or hostels or clubs, even though these enterprises bring an ordinary return on capital, unless that capital is forthcoming. We do not appeal to sentiment, but to common sense. Would it not be money well invested? Is not the housing of the woman worker of importance?

Shall we not chart our great towns, build lighthouses, indicate safe routes of travel? The Travellers' Aid Society does much to aid travellers in difficulty. But more is needed—safe places to *live*.

I have said this is no kid-glove question. Before we damn the victim and condemn her to the *inferno*, we must ask, what have we done to prevent it? Where does she live, the poor, lonely, half-starved solitary worker, managing on her slender pittance? If in her own home, sometimes all is well ; sometimes the home itself is too cramped and must send its daughters forth, like its sons, to battle alone. We wonder at the crowds of young that promenade the streets. Do we consider how the armies of flashily-dressed young women, already "on the streets," appeal to the poor, lonely, half-starved solitary worker,

with her craving for a natural life as wife and mother? Do we consider how easily she falls a prey to her best instincts, a victim to the young man who can so easily pick and choose, so easily betray? Because of these problems of drunkenness and vice men fear to tackle the lodging-house question, even though the actual prostitute, the woman who gets her living by vice, is easily ruled out. She must keep late hours, and to make up for them she must lie abed in the morning. Make regulations for decent hours and strictly keep them, and you rule her out of lodging-homes. Who, then, is to save those who are tempted? Through the length and breadth of England, we women have helped to make Rescue Homes for the fallen; they are overfull. But we have shut our eyes to the real problem. We must see that our women workers are rightly and safely housed. No parent of whatever class should ever allow a girl to go to a great city without inquiry as to where she can be safely housed. The police are constantly finding on our streets innocent girls who have simply run into perils they did not know. Sometimes to save them they lock them up in a police cell. Imagine a poor young girl locked up alone in such a place! Yet, as Mr. Mackereth said in a speech to women industrials: "In some of our English towns *it is the only safe place*."

If from any cause a girl or a woman parts with her woman's heritage, we call her "fallen." God only knows what circumstances she has had to stand in. Could we stand?

At a crisis in my life when, with inward shrinking that was only too well justified by experience, I was nerving myself to go and see with my own eyes the fate of my sisters, when night after night I could not sleep soundly for thinking of their fate, and of what I knew was even then happening—one night I had a dream.

I dreamt I was by the side of a broad river, and as it flowed swiftly by, I perceived to my horror floating bodies. They were women! I stood on the bank, and as they were borne near me, I grasped one after another and with infinite struggle drew them to shore. Sometimes I saved one, sometimes I could not do it.

But at last the horror of their multitude took hold on me. Why were there so many? They came on and on. Many were in midstream, beyond possibility of rescue.

I gave up my fruitless task and rushed wildly up the river. Where did they come from? Surely there was something wrong. Was there no bridge? I pressed along the bank. Yes, there was a bridge. I passed along it with a crowd of women. Women

of all sorts: the well-dressed shop girl, the factory hand, the very poor, all pressing to cross the bridge. But presently I recoiled in horror. *There was a gap!* They were falling! One after another they fell, and went down into the dark depths. That explained the stream of drowning women. I woke shuddering with horror, crying out: "By God's help the bridge shall be repaired." I saw that this was the key. It was given me in this dream. Have you read Kipling's "Bridge Builders"? If you have, you will know what a difficult thing it is to build a bridge, but how noble! Wind and tide are against you. The forces of evil are against you. Do not underrate those forces. In many places they are leagued already against the defenceless. Do you realise what the "White Slave Traffic" means? Do you realise that there are those to whom a lonely, defenceless girl is lawful prey? Those who, like the "wreckers" of forgotten times, get their living by *luring to ruin*. Only it is not *lives* alone, but *souls* that perish—women enslaved body and soul, a fate worse than death. And in the death struggle such a girl often clutches another and yet another, and pulls them under.

From all ranks they come, floating down the river of death. What do you know of "The City of Dreadful Night," of which

George Sims speaks? I have slept in a woman's lodging-house, managed in the interests of vice; I have heard the drunken steps of young girls staggering to bed after midnight. I have seen fresh victims, who have accidentally sought shelter, only to go under. This is the broken bridge.

Should you not, in order to sleep quietly at nights, at least be sure that in your town there is some place where a sister woman can be safe? Can we any longer even afford to let these problems alone? Already the prostitute competes with the mother, with the wife, for the love that should be theirs. Along some of the principal streets of our great cities our sons, our lovers, our husbands cannot pass *unsolicited*. What untold misery to womanhood does this mean! What does it reveal? How far away from this the happy, pure home, an Englishwoman's heritage!

We shut these questions away from our thinking, but they are becoming insistent. The flood of unprotected young life, male and female, is in our streets, the pure mixing with the impure. Can we even save our sons? Not if we do not care for other's daughters. Not if the very shop girl who serves us over her counter with our little needed finery has no place to live. Emergencies come even to her. In the recent great London fire some hundreds were turned adrift. They lost their

all in the fire. Next day they were given by their firm a week's wages. Charity was forthcoming. But where did they drift to? Where was there for them to go? That was a sudden and public calamity, meeting with public sympathy. But there are many hidden calamities that elicit no public sympathy, but throw a girl suddenly into peril. She often drifts, a helpless victim, to destruction.

Is there, then, not need for a great League of Womanhood to protect Womanhood? May we not also rally the best and noblest men to the chivalry of the twentieth century? Here are dragons to be slain, castles, the strongholds of evil, to be demolished, evil to be overcome by good. Here is the remedy for the callousness and helplessness that may settle on our own hearts with reference to the problems of our day and generation. Here is real touch with real need. It is not a work that can be done all at once. It needs patient investigation of local need, patient adaptation of means to ends, patient experiment. In the solution of this problem we shall come into real touch with many others, the problem of the sweated worker, the unemployed, the ill-used wife—in fact, all women's problems in their acutest phase. But we shall get no dilettante knowledge, but real insight into the heart of things. And the hearts of women are the heart of our nation.

Of them is born the England of the future. This is what we can do to save England with a very real salvation. We must put ourselves into it. We must dare to go forward even if alone.

"They are slaves who fear to speak
For the fallen and the weak.
They are slaves who dare not be
In the right with two or three."

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

THE GIRL'S REALM GUILD HOSTEL

Approximate outlay and estimated receipts for 214 residents and 25 servants.

COST OF BUILDING, FURNISHING, ETC.

	£	s.	d.
Cost of Building ... ... about	28,500	0	0
Architects' fees at 5 per cent.	1,425	0	0
Surveys, copies of drawings for District Surveyor, Freeholders, L.C.C., etc. ... ... say	30	0	0
Quantity Surveyors' fees at 1½ per cent.	427	0	0
Clerk of Works' salary, say 18 months at £4 4s. per week	328	0	0
Furnishing, fittings, carpets, linoleum, curtains, etc., for 239 persons at, say, £12 each	2,868	0	0
Formation of Company, legal fees, etc., say about	300	0	0
Approximate capital ...	£33,878	0	0

Annual Outgoings.

	£	s.	d.
Ground rent ... ... say	1,000	0	0
The total annual outgoings at Hopkinson House (see Balance Sheet, May, 1908) for 139 persons, including employees (but exclusive of £250 for ground rent), £3,645 15s.			
On a similar basis the outgoings for the Girl's Realm Guild Hostel, with 239 persons, including employees, would be about ... ... (Lease for 840 years is practically freehold.)	6,268	0	0
Maintenance fund ... ... say	200	0	0
Annual outgoings ...	£7,468	0	0

Annual Receipts.

	£	s.	d.
The annual receipts from Hopkinson House (see Balance Sheet, May, 1908), for rent of bedrooms and board of residents are £5,177. There are 139 persons, viz., 124 residents and 15 employees. This sum represents an average of 8s. 8d. per week for rent and 7s. 4½d. per week per resident for board, or an average of £41 14s. 11d. per resident per annum. Presuming at this Hostel the residents would be charged an average of 1s. additional per week for rent and 5½d. per week additional for board, they would each pay an average of 9s. 8d. per week for rent and 7s. 10d. per week for board, or an			

	£	s.	d.
average of £45 10s. each per annum. In the present scheme accommodation is provided for 239 persons (214 residents and 25 employees). On the above basis 214 residents, each paying £45 10s. per annum, the annual receipts would be about	9,737	0	0
Deduct outgoings	7,468	0	0
Annual profit about ...	£2,269	0	0

£2,269 profit on £33,878 = 6⅔ per cent.

R. STEPHEN AYLING, F.R.I.B.A.,
Architect,
March, 1909. Westminster, S.W.

St. Clement's House, Limited.

A suitable site near Oxford Circus has been found for another Residential Club for Women, as owing to termination of lease one of the present residential clubs is threatened with extinction. Capital £20,000. Capital is greatly needed. Shares £1.—Hon. Sec., 91, Great Portland Street, W.

APPENDIX II

The National Association for Women's Lodging-homes (British Institute of Social Service, 4, Tavistock Square, W.C.) was formed as the result of a well-attended and representative Conference held on February 24, 1909, at the offices of the British Institute of Social Service, kindly lent for the purpose.

The British Institute forms an admirable centre, and as its object is to focus information on social subjects and further public enlightenment, the assistance it is able to give to the objects of the Association is invaluable.

These objects are :—

1. To link together all organisations and individuals interested in opening or maintaining Lodging-homes, Lodging-houses, or Shelters for Women and Girls in the United Kingdom.

2. To collect and disseminate information as to existing accommodation and the need for more, by publication, conferences, deputations to public authorities, etc.

3. To promote legislation for the better regulation of Common Lodging-houses in so far as they affect women.

4. To encourage the formation of local committees affiliated with the parent Association.

Hon. General Secretary—Secretary of British Institute of Social Service.

General Treasurer—Mrs. Hylton Dale, 60, Onslow Gardens, S.W.

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Mrs. Hugh Price Hughes (West London Mission).
Miss Emily Janes (National Union of Women Workers).
Mrs. Ernest W. Johnson ("White Ribbon" Lodging-home, Cambridge).
Bishop of Liverpool.
Mrs. Mackirdy (authoress of "Thirteen Nights," etc.).
Mrs. Alex. Matheson (Presbyterian Women's Settlement).
Mrs. Marion Montagu (Industrial Clubs' Association and Treasurer of Emily Harris' Home for Working Girls).
Miss Moon (Young Women's Christian Association).

J. S. Nettlefold, Esq. (Chairman, Housing Committee, Birmingham Council).
Mrs. J. Turner Rae (President, Girls' Guild of Good Life).
Miss Elizabeth Robins.
Mrs. Scott (Headmistress, Godstowe School, High Wycombe).
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Chas. Singer, Esq. (Jewish Association for Protection of Girls and Women).
Rev. W. S. Swayne (Rector of St. Peter's, Cranley Gardens).
Rev. Hy. Stuart (Vicar, Stoke-on-Trent).
Lady Edmund Talbot (Ladies of Charity).
Miss G. A. Tong, B.A. (Federation of Working Girls' Clubs).
Colonel Henry Vincent (founder of Lodging-home in Ayr).
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Councillor Wilkins, J.P. (Treasurer of National Housing and Town Planning Association).
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APPENDIX III

MEMORANDUM ISSUED BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD SUGGESTING CONDITIONS, NOT NECESSARILY COMPULSORY, UNDER WHICH HOUSING LOANS MIGHT BE GRANTED BY THE TREASURY

(*c*) Lodging-houses.

It is desirable to limit the size of any building intended for occupation as a lodging-house, so that it may be of a capacity to hold not more than some 200 lodgers. It should be arranged so as to secure ample means of through ventilation within it, and the utmost facilities for the access of sunlight and for free circulation of air about the outside of it.

The accommodation within, if intended for both sexes, must be arranged for the complete separation of one sex from the other, except in any case where married couples may be received. It should comprise, for each sex, an entrance and a staircase to the upper floors, an office being provided in such a position as to control the respective entrances for the males and females. A day-room with floor-area affording some 15 square feet to each lodger is requisite, and unless a proper kitchen range is provided therein, a general kitchen will also be requisite with suitable range or ranges and other appliances where the lodgers may cook their food. A scullery,

where the food utensils may be cleaned and kept, is also desirable.

In lodging-houses of large capacity a common room should be provided in addition to a dining-room.

The sleeping rooms may appropriately be in the upper storeys, and are best of moderate size, holding not more than about 20 lodgers each. They should be some 10 or 11 feet in height, and if provided with good means of ventilation by windows in their opposite external sides they may be arranged so that each bed will have some 5 feet lineal of wall space, 40 square feet of floor-area, and from 300 to 400 cubic feet of air space. If, however, the means of ventilation be indifferent, those amounts of space ought to be increased. The windows should be arranged as far as practicable so as not to come immediately over any bed.

It may often be desirable to provide a certain proportion of the accommodation in separate rooms or cubicles for lodgers who may be able and willing to pay at a higher rate for the privilege of privacy.

The water-closet accommodation should be provided at the rate of one closet for every 15 to 20 lodgers, with urinals for the male sex, and lavatories, with fixed basins and strong taps and waste pipes, in the proportion of one basin to about every ten lodgers. Sufficient baths and footpans should also be provided. Both the water-closets and the lavatories should be on the ground floor, the closets for each sex being in a separate yard. But at least one water-closet for occasional use in connection with the dormitories may be provided in the upper storeys if it be properly separated from the interior of the building by a well-ventilated lobby. A good slop sink, with water laid on, should also be provided near the dormitories, likewise a dry clothes store closet in which a supply of clean sheets and blankets can be kept. A hot-water cistern may conveniently be fixed in this store closet, and thus

tend to keep the sheets well aired. A properly contrived hot closet is also desirable as a means of drying the wet clothes of lodgers.

It is useful to provide in some convenient position a set of lockers in which any lodger may place under lock and key any small articles and property which he does not desire to carry about with him.

The structure of the building should be as secure against danger from fire as practicable, and in every case it is desirable that alternative means of egress from the upper floors should be provided, so that in the event of the staircase in one direction being temporarily obstructed by smoke or otherwise, a safe exit may be afforded in another direction.

It must be understood that, in the lodging-houses, as well as in blocks of buildings comprising separate dwellings, a certain amount of systematic supervision will be requisite to ensure proper cleanliness and order throughout, and to protect the several tenants from neglect and carelessness on the part of their neighbours.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD,
January, 1903.

APPENDIX IV

TYPICAL CASES RECEIVED AT SHAFTESBURY HOUSE, BIRMINGHAM GIRLS' HOSTEL

1. *Hinge Maker*, 19.—Father, many times in prison now dead from the effects of drink. Mother in workhouse.

2. *Button Maker*, 15.—No home. Father away, mother and younger children in workhouse.

3. *Bottle Washer*, 16.—Fond of drink. Mother dead, slowly killed by the cruelty of her husband. Father in penal servitude for ill-using and outraging his children. Eldest daughter in asylum as result of father's cruelty. Younger children in workhouse.

4. *Warehouse Girl*, 16.—Very pretty, in great peril. Rescued just in time from an apparently respectable home, where her immoral mother lived apart from her drunken father.

5. *Lacquerer*, 16.—Previously street seller. Illegitimate child, rescued from awful conditions.

6. *Pressworker*, 15. — Orphan. Only relatives, younger brothers and sisters in workhouse. Found in filthy neglected condition.

7. *Bookbinder*, 14. Illegitimate child of weak-minded mother who is in service. A small, delicate child, found in undesirable lodgings.

8. *Pressworker*, 15.—Orphan. Had lived with a married sister, who, with her husband, drank heavily. Girl found in a filthy and starved condition.

9. *Warehouse Girl*, 18.—Parents both living, but heavy drinkers. Five or six homes broken up by drink. Parents and younger children spend half their time in workhouse.

10. *Lathe Worker*, 19.—Father and mother drunkards. Father in prison many times for drunkenness and brutality.

11. *Press Worker*, 26.—Respectable but friendless orphan.

12. *Bag Maker*, 21.—Respectable parents who have moved to a distant town.

13. *French Polisher*, 19.—Respectable but friendless orphan.

14. *Laundress*, 25.—Respectable orphan, without friends or relatives in town.

APPENDIX V

Between February, 1908, and December, 1909, there were received into Bent House, Oldham, 58 women industrials, employed as follows: Card-room hands, weavers, reelers, and women employed in cotton waste warehouses, jam works, nut and bolt works, 13 charwomen, 4 laundry hands, 21 servants, 1 tailoress, 12 hawkers, 1 polisher, 2 old persons dependent on pension or relatives, 34 of no settled employment who through temporary distress needed shelter. These latter are too various to be classified, and include married women, sometimes with children, whose husbands had no home for them, women visiting the town to see relatives who had no sleeping accommodation, women temporarily seeking refuge from drunken husbands, etc.—Total, 145.

Between June, 1908, and December, 1909, covering rather less than the above period, there were received at Hope House, Oldham, also a lodging-house for women, 26 industrials, 9 charwomen, 4 tailoresses, 39 servants, 12 hawkers, 5 laundry hands, 2 dressmakers, 5 old people, and 48 miscellaneous. This lodging-house is registered as a common lodging-house, and as some only stayed one or two nights it was more difficult to ascertain exact occupation. In addition, 34 destitute cases were received for short periods.—Total, 184. These are separate individuals; if the number of cases were counted it would be considerably larger, as some, notably servants, returned again and again.

Bent House, 1908.

Receipts—

£110 11 0

Expenses—

	£	s.	d.
Fuel	16	13	8
Gas	5	3	0½
Rates	3	5	7½
Sundries	9	10	3½
Repairs	6	15	5
Window-cleaning	1	7	3
Wages	62	10	3½
Total ...	105	5	7

Beds supplied, 6,205.

Hope House.

Receipts—

£76 11 2

Remainder from Subscriptions for Rescue Work.

Expenses—

	£	s.	d.
Matron's salary, servant, and coal	79	5	7
Gas	7	8	7
Rates	5	10	7
Sundries	6	1	0½
Rent	22	0	0
Total ...	120	5	9½

Beds supplied, 4,600.

In addition a number of persons were given free lodgings.

APPENDIX VI

GLASGOW WOMEN'S MUNICIPAL LODGING-HOUSE

In 1872 a Women's Lodging-house was built, accommodating 125 women. This lodging-house has been twice enlarged and now accommodates 248. The cost of the site, buildings, and furnishings was £9,028, or £36 per head. On this a yearly interest has been paid of £3 19s. per cent.

	£	s.	d.
The receipts in 1907 to May 31st were	1,269	13	5
„ 1908 „	1,262	4	4

99 per cent. of the beds were filled throughout the year.

The cost of the beds is only 3d., 3½d., and 4d.

The following is a detailed account of 1908 expenditure :—

	£	s.	d.
Matron's salary	70	0	0
Harmoniumist	5	0	0
Servants	261	4	2
Fuel	94	14	7
Gas	43	8	5
Water	23	7	1
Rates and taxes	124	0	5
Washings and furnishings ...	154	8	0
Fire insurance	5	16	0
Bedding	18	13	0
Repairs	68	13	11
Telephone	4	10	0
Manager's office	22	2	6

	£	s.	d.
Interest	253	11	3
Entertainments	8	1	0
Depreciations	90	5	9
Total ...	1,247	16	1

It will be seen that all expenses are met on thoroughly sound commercial principles, yet leave a profit.

Those who have visited the lodging-house testify that it is well conducted, forms a safe refuge for poor women, and that Municipal control means well regulated hours and entire absence of the degradation, vice, and uncleanliness inevitably associated with the common lodging-house.

We may compare these figures with the following, extracted from "Housing Up-to-date," by Alderman Thompson (p. 39) :—

Town.	Beds.	Total Cost.	Cost of Building and Furnishing per Head.	Charge per Night.
Croydon	84 men 17 women	£7,435	£71	men, 6d. women, 5d.
Darwen (1898)	110 men 20 women	£7,920	£61	5d.
Huddersfield (1880)	163 men 12 women 10 double	£7,500	£38	men, 3d. and 5d. women, 5d. couples, 6d.

In Manchester a Women's Municipal Lodging-house is being opened shortly at a cost of £13,000, *i.e.*, £11,000 for building and £2,000 for furniture, to accommodate 220.

APPENDIX VII

BRADFORD WOMEN'S SHELTER, 148, SUNBRIDGE ROAD

Founded by Mrs. Maufe in 1883.

Receipts—

	£	s.	d.
From beds let	237	13	3

Expenditure, Working Expenses—

	£	s.	d.
Wages	161	10	1
Gas	15	17	7
Fuel	31	9	10
Rates	30	10	1
Insurance	1	11	0
Household renewals ...	43	8	5
„ expenses ...	4	18	11
Cleaning	9	19	0
Sundries	1	3	3
	300	8	2
Interest on mortgage ...	53	19	6
Printing and advertising	13	11	10
Telephone	6	5	0
Cheque-book	0	5	0

N.B.—There is a mortgage of £1,500 on the original expenditure. The rest of the expenditure is met by subscriptions.

During the year 20,567 beds were let at prices from 3d. to 6d. Free beds to the value of £14 5s. 5d. were also given.

It will be seen from the Report how useful the Shelter has proved to many homeless women.

APPENDIX VIII

ESTIMATED EXPENDITURE FOR PRIVATE LODGING-HOUSE FOR THIRTY, SELF-SUPPORTING AFTER FIRST COST

	£	s.	d.
Income at 2s. per week	3	0	0
Allow for change of lodgers and bad debts	0	5	0
Income	2	15	0
Expenses (weekly)—			
Salary, working caretaker; free bed, gas, and coal	0	14	0
Dividend on receipts above £1, 1½d. in 1s. (average) ... ... (Out of this caretaker finds soap, etc.)	0	4	4½
Service 7s. and free bed ... ... (Lodger employed who earns a little also by washing or cooking for lodgers)	0	7	0
Coal and gas (average)	0	7	6
Rates	0	1	6
	1	14	4½
Margin for rent, deterioration, and interest	1	0	7½
	2	15	0

APPENDIX IX

LIST OF SAFE LODGING-HOMES

It is hoped by degrees *to accumulate information* and to *compile lists of all safe and sanitary Lodging-homes for Women and Girls throughout the United Kingdom*, so that information could be supplied to individuals or Societies.

This must, however, be a work of time.

Two great Societies, the *Young Women's Christian Association* and the *Girls' Friendly Society*, stand in the forefront. The provision they make is, however, mainly intended for their own Members. In the case of the G.F.S. there is a difference in tariff: Members from 7s. 6d., non-Members from 8s. 6d., Associates from 18s. 6d., non-Associates from £1 weekly.

Lists of Y.W.C.A. Homes may be obtained from the headquarters, 25 and 26, Hanover Square, W.

Lists of the G.F.S. Lodges and Homes of Rest may be obtained by procuring the "Associates List," 1910. G.F.S. headquarters, 39, Victoria Street, S.W.

The *London list of Y.W.C.A. and G.F.S. Homes is given later.*

The terms of the Y.W.C.A. vary from 10s. or 10s. 6d. to 15s. to 17s. 6d. per week with a few exceptions, and are regulated by the classes served, which are mainly business assistants, teachers, students, and sometimes servants, etc.

The *Church Army* has Lodging-houses at 12, Hart Street, *Edinburgh*, 7s. 6d. to 8s. 6d. a week, 12 beds; and 10, Grove Place, *Swansea*, 6d. and 8d. a night, 12 beds.

London Homes given later.

The *Salvation Army* has Lodging-homes (called Shelters usually) at *Edinburgh*, 118 beds at 1d., 2d., 4d. and 6d.

Glasgow, 133 beds at 4d.

Dundee, 103 beds at 4d. and 6d.

Bristol, 19 beds at 4d. and 6d.

Cardiff, 40 beds at 4d. and 6d.

Southampton, 44 beds at 4d. and 6d.

Leeds, 57 beds at 6d. (Women's Temperance Hostel).

Liverpool, 108 beds at 4d. and 6d. (Ann Fowler Home).

In London, Whitechapel Shelter, 276 beds at 2d. (see p. 167).

It is desirable that for all large towns lists should be completed. The following are given as *samples*:—

Birmingham.

Y.W.C.A. Home and a G.F.S. Lodge:

Girls' Night Shelter, 9, Tennant Street. Supper, bed, and breakfast free.

Shaftesbury House, St. Mary's Row, 5s. 6d. per week, board included.

486, *Great Brook Street*, 5s. 6d. per week, board and lodging.

St. Anthony's Home (R.C.) for Working Girls, 22, Vicarage Road, 6s. weekly, board and lodging.

*Night Refuge** (R.C.), Bath Street. Free lodging, supper, and breakfast.

*St. Joseph's Home** (R.C.), Hunters Road, 5s. 6d. weekly, board and lodging.

* These are connected with Rescue Work.

Liverpool.

Y.W.C.A. Homes and G.F.S. Lodge:

Miss Simpson, 23, Great George Square, 3s. 6d. per week, bed and use of kitchen, 2s. 6d. per day or 10s. per week board.

Jewish Home, 27, Great Orford Street.

St. Joseph's Home, 17, Everton Crescent, board and lodging, 9s. per week.

St. Saviour's Refuge and Night Shelter Lime Kiln Lane, board and lodging 1s. per day.

Mrs. Arnoux, 76, Shaw Street.

Salvation Army, Ann Fowler Home, Netherfield Road, 3d. to 6d. beds.

Temperance Home, 45, Everton Brow, beds 4d.

Mission of Love, 44 and 46, Everton Brow, beds 2d. and 3d.

Welsh Servants' Registry and Home, Upper Hope Place.

Royal Hostel, Islington, Matron, Miss Firth, beds 6d.

Manchester.

Besides Y.W.C.A. (New Bridge Street, apply for information) and G.F.S. Lodge, 116, Cheetham Hill Road:

Central Hall,* Oldham Street; application may be made for shelter.

Strangers' Lodging-house, 53, New Bridge Street.

Female Strangers' Lodging-house, Downing Street.

St. Vincent's Night Shelter and Home for Girls,* St. Vincent Street, Ancoats, R.C.

Wood Street Mission.*

Municipal Women's Lodging-home, 220 beds, shortly to open.

These are specimens of the provision at present existing in several large towns. Information from others will be welcomed.

* These are connected with Rescue Work.

London.

The *Y.W.C.A.* leads the way with *Homes combined with Institutes* at Kensington, Westbourne Park, Hammersmith and Ealing (West), Gray's Inn (W.C.), Brompton Road, Putney, Fulham, Clapham, Brixton and Upper Tooting (S.W.), Islington, Holloway, Highbury, Crouch End, East Finchley and Finchley (N.), St. John's Wood, Hampstead, Highgate Road and Harlesden (N.W.), Leytonstone and Leyton (N.E.), Blackheath, Hatcham, Sydenham, Penge, South Norwood and Woolwich (S.E.).

Y.M.C.A., *for Board and Residence only*, Oxford Circus, Ames House and Kent House (W.), p. 54, Bayswater (W.), Dorset Square (N.W.), Clapton (N.E.), Borough (S.E.).

At Morley Rooms, E.C., the price is 5s. to 8s., but the usual price is from 10s. 6d. upwards or 12s. 6d. upwards.

The *G.F.S.* Lodges are Berkeley Square, Brixton, Chelsea, Deptford, Ealing, Holloway, Kensington, Westbourne Park. For Members from 7s. 6d., Associates from 8s. 6d.; for others, prices higher.

The *Church Army* have—

Lodging-house, 117, Seymour Place, W., 6d. lodging, 1s. board and lodging, per night. Only special cases.

Boarding-house, 32, Milford Place, Edgware Road, W., 9d. a night, 5s. 6d. bed and breakfast, and 9s. 6d. full board, for a week; 20 beds. Good references required, p. 55.

The Hostel, 131, Uxbridge Road, Shepherd's Bush, 1s. a night, 7s. a week for bed and breakfast, 12s. 6d. full board; 28 beds, p. 55. Superior servants, shop assistants, and other.

Homes for Ladies.

Brabazon House, Moreton Street, Belgrave Road, S.W., p. 52.

Hopkinson House, Vauxhall Bridge Road, S.W., p. 51.

St. George's House, 87, Vincent Square, Westminster, S.W., p. 52.

Swiss House, 35, Fitzroy Square, subsidised by Swiss Government, receives French and Swiss.

French Home (Madame Degremont), Presbytère, 9, Soho Square, W.

St. George's Hostel for Ladies, 79, Gloucester Street, S.W., p. 52.

Calandra Club, 35, St. George's Square, W., p. 52.

Pimlico Ladies' Association, 31, Cumberland Street, p. 54.

John Shrimpton's Homes, 3, Victoria Street, S.W., p. 54.

For poorer Women and Girls.

Emily Harris Home for Jewish Working Girls, Alfred Place, Tottenham Court Road, 40 beds.

Portman House, Harrow and Union Street, Lisson Grove, N.W., p. 173.

Victoria Hostel, 17 and 19, Newington Causeway, S.E., p. 172, 3s. 6d. weekly for cubicle, but selective of clients though moderate in price, pp. 55, 172.

House of Residence, 15A, Vicarage Gate, S.W. Home for Roman Catholic business girls. Cubicles 4s. and 4s. 6d., private rooms 10s. to 20s.

Seton House, 26, Highbury Place, N. (references required). Home for business women. Payment from 3s. to 5s. weekly for cubicles.

Soho Club, 59, Greek Street, Soho, p. 54.

"Sarah Pyke" House, 45, Great Prescot Street, Whitechapel, p. 172 (for Jewish Girls 1s. per day, p. 54).

House of Help, British Women's Temperance Association, New Kent Road. Both for respectable women and for those sent from Police Courts ; 6d. per night.

The Theatrical Home, 92 and 121, Charlotte Street, Fitzroy Square, W.
Whitechapel S.A. Women's Shelter—bunks, 2d.

PRIVATE WOMEN'S LODGING-HOMES—

Worcester (42, Newport Street), p. 175,
Ayr, p. 175,
Stockport, p. 176,
Oldham, p. 169,
Bradford, Appendix VII.
York (Women's Lodge)—

supply poorer women, and one is shortly to be opened in *Aberdeen.*

MUNICIPAL WOMEN'S LODGING-HOMES.

Municipal Lodging-house for women only, *Glasgow*, Appendix VI.
Municipal Lodging-house for women only (shortly to be opened), *Manchester.*

Information as to other Lodging-homes affording safe shelter to women or girls will be welcomed by either Northern or Southern Secretary.

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